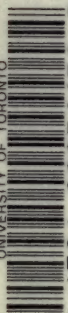


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



3 1761 00054450 2



Presented to
The Library
of the
University of Toronto
by
Bertram M. Davis
from the books of
the late Lionel Davis, M.C.





REVIEWS

~~LB~~

~~W6724re~~

REVIEWS

BY

OSCAR WILDE

VOLUME I



AUTHORISED EDITION

421094
31.3.44

THE MUSSON BOOK COMPANY, LTD.
TORONTO

JOHN W. LUCE & CO.
BOSTON



All rights reserved
JOHN W. LUCE & Co.

PR
5810
Fog
v. 12

To

Mrs. CAREW

THE apparently endless difficulties against which I have contended, and am contending, in the management of Oscar Wilde's literary and dramatic property have brought me many valued friends; but only one friendship which seemed as endless; one friend's kindness which seemed to annul the disappointments of eight years. That is why I venture to place your name on this volume with the assurance of the author himself who bequeathed to me his works and something of his indiscretion.

ROBERT ROSS

May 12th, 1908.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	xi
Dinners and Dishes	1
A Modern Epic	3
Shakespeare on Scenery	6
A Bevy of Poets	11
Parnassus <i>versus</i> Philology	15
<i>Hamlet</i> at the Lyceum	16
Two New Novels	20
<i>Henry the Fourth</i> at Oxford	22
Modern Greek Poetry	26
<i>Olivia</i> at the Lyceum	28
<i>As You Like It</i> at Coombe House	32
A Handbook to Marriage	36
Half-Hours with the Worst Authors	38
One of Mr. Conway's Remainders	40
To Read or Not to Read	43
<i>Twelfth Night</i> at Oxford	44
The Letters of a Great Woman	47
News from Parnassus	51
Some Novels	55
A Literary Pilgrim	58
Béranger in England	60
The Poetry of the People	63
<i>The Cenci</i>	66
<i>Helena in Troas</i>	69

REVIEWS

	PAGE
Pleasing and Prattling	74
Balzac in English	77
Two New Novels	81
Ben Jonson	84
The Poets' Corner—I.	89
A Ride Through Morocco	92
The Children of the Poets	95
New Novels	98
A Politician's Poetry	102
Mr. Symonds' <i>History of the Renaissance</i>	105
A 'Jolly' Art Critic	110
A Sentimental Journey Through Literature	115
Common-Sense in Art	119
Miner and Minor Poets	123
A New Calendar	128
The Poets' Corner—II.	131
Great Writers by Little Men	135
A New Book on Dickens	141
Our Book-Shelf	144
A Cheap Edition of a Great Man	148
Mr. Morris's <i>Odyssey</i>	153
A Batch of Novels	157
Some Novels	161
The Poets' Corner—III.	167
Mr. Pater's <i>Imaginary Portraits</i>	172
A Good Historical Novel	176
New Novels	179
Two Biographies of Keats	181
A Scotchman on Scottish Poetry	186
Literary and Other Notes—I.	190
Mr. Mahaffy's New Book	209

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Mr. Morris's Completion of the <i>Odyssey</i>	215
Sir Charles Bowen's <i>Virgil</i>	220
Literary and Other Notes—II.	224
Aristotle at Afternoon Tea	242
Early Christian Art in Ireland	247
Literary and Other Notes—III.	251
The Poets' Corner—IV.	269
Literary and Other Notes—IV.	275
The Poets' Corner—V.	291
Venus or Victory	296
Literary and other Notes—V.	300
The Poets' Corner—VI.	311
M. Caro on George Sand	316
The Poets' Corner—VII.	321
A Fascinating Book	327
The Poets' Corner—VIII.	341
A Note on Some Modern Poets	347
Sir Edwin Arnold's Last Volume	365
Australian Poets	369
Some Literary Notes—I.	374
Poetry and Prison	393
The Gospel According to Walt Whitman	396
The New President	402
Some Literary Notes—II.	406
One of the Bibles of the World	420
Poetical Socialists	425
Mr. Brander Matthews' Essays	428
Some Literary Notes—III.	433
Mr. William Morris's Last Book	447
Adam Lindsay Gordon	452
The Poets' Corner—IX.	457

REVIEWS

	PAGE
Some Literary Notes—IV.	463
Mr. Froude's Blue-Book	476
Some Literary Notes—V.	482
Ouida's New Novel	494
Some Literary Notes—VI.	499
A Thought-Reader's Novel	509
The Poets' Corner—X.	513
Mr. Swinburne's Last Volume	519
Three New Poets	523
A Chinese Sage	528
Mr. Pater's Last Volume	538
Primavera	545
INDEX OF AUTHORS AND BOOKS REVIEWED	549

INTRODUCTION

THE editor of writings by any author not long deceased is censured sooner or later for his errors of omission or commission. I have decided to err on the side of commission and to include in the uniform edition of Wilde's works everything that could be identified as genuine. Wilde's literary reputation has survived so much that I think it proof against any exhumation of articles which he or his admirers would have preferred to forget. As a matter of fact, I believe this volume will prove of unusual interest; some of the reviews are curiously prophetic; some are, of course, biassed by prejudice hostile or friendly; others are conceived in the author's wittiest and happiest vein; only a few are colourless. And if, according to Lord Beaconsfield, the verdict of a continental nation may be regarded as that of posterity, Wilde is a much greater force in our literature than even friendly contemporaries ever supposed he would become.

It should be remembered, however, that at the time when most of these reviews were written Wilde had published scarcely any of the works by which his name has become famous in Europe,

REVIEWS

though the protagonist of the æsthetic movement was a well-known figure in Paris and London. Later he was recognised—it would be truer to say he was ignored—as a young man who had never fulfilled the high promise of a distinguished university career although his volume of *Poems* had reached its fifth edition, an unusual event in those days. He had alienated a great many of his Oxford contemporaries by his extravagant manner of dress and his methods of courting publicity. The great men of the previous generation, Wilde's intellectual peers, with whom he was in artistic sympathy, looked on him askance. Ruskin was disappointed with his former pupil, and Pater did not hesitate to express disapprobation to private friends; while he accepted incense from a disciple, he distrusted the thurifer.

From a large private correspondence in my possession I gather that it was, oddly enough, in political and social centres that Wilde's amazing powers were rightly appreciated and where he was welcomed as the most brilliant of living talkers. Before he had published anything except his *Poems*, the literary dovecots regarded him with dislike, and when he began to publish essays and fairy stories, the attitude was not changed; it was merely emphasised in the public press. His first dramatic success at the St. James's Theatre gave Wilde, of course, a different position, and the dislike became qualified with envy. Some of the younger men indeed were dazzled, but with few exceptions their appreciation was expressed in an unfortunate

INTRODUCTION

manner. It is a consolation or a misfortune that the wrong kind of people are too often correct in their prognostications of the future; the far-seeing are also the foolish.

From these reviews which illustrate the middle period of Wilde's meteoric career, between the æsthetic period and the production of *Lady Windermere's Fan*, we learn *his* opinion of the contemporaries who thought little enough of him. That he revised many of these opinions, notably those that are harsh, I need scarcely say; and after his release from prison he lost much of his admiration for certain writers. I would draw special attention to those reviews of Mr. Swinburne, Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, Mr. Alfred Austin, the Hon. John Collier, Mr. Brander Matthews and Sir Edwin Arnold, Rossetti, Pater, Henley and Morris; they have more permanent value than the others, and are in accord with the wiser critical judgments of to-day.

For leave to republish the articles from the *Pall Mall Gazette* I am indebted to Mr. William Waldorf Astor, the owner of the copyrights, by arrangement with whom they are here reprinted. I have to thank most cordially Messrs. Cassell and Company for permitting me to reproduce the editorial articles and reviews contributed by Wilde to the *Woman's World*; the editor and proprietor of the *Nation* for leave to include the two articles from the *Speaker*; and the editor of the *Saturday Review* for a similar courtesy. For identifying many of the anonymous

REVIEWS

articles I am indebted to Mr. Arthur Humphreys, not the least of his kindnesses in assisting the publication of this edition; for the trouble of editing, arrangement, and collecting of material I am under obligations to Mr. Stuart Mason for which this acknowledgment is totally inadequate.

ROBERT ROSS

REFORM CLUB,
May 12th, 1908

DINNERS AND DISHES

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 7, 1885.)

A MAN can live for three days without bread, but no man can live for one day without poetry, was an aphorism of Baudelaire. You can live without pictures and music but you cannot live without eating, says the author of *Dinners and Dishes*; and this latter view is, no doubt, the more popular. Who, indeed, in these degenerate days would hesitate between an ode and an omelette, a sonnet and a salmis? Yet the position is not entirely Philistine; cookery is an art; are not its principles the subject of South Kensington lectures, and does not the Royal Academy give a banquet once a year? Besides, as the coming democracy will, no doubt, insist on feeding us all on penny dinners, it is well that the laws of cookery should be explained: for were the national meal burned, or badly seasoned, or served up with the wrong sauce a dreadful revolution might follow.

Under these circumstances we strongly recommend *Dinners and Dishes* to every one: it is brief and concise and makes no attempt at eloquence, which is extremely fortunate. For even on ortolans who could endure oratory? It also has the advantage of not being illustrated. The subject of a work of art has, of course, nothing to do with its beauty, but

REVIEWS

still there is always something depressing about the coloured lithograph of a leg of mutton.

As regards the author's particular views, we entirely agree with him on the important question of macaroni. 'Never,' he says, 'ask me to back a bill for a man who has given me a macaroni pudding.' Macaroni is essentially a savoury dish and may be served with cheese or tomatoes but never with sugar and milk. There is also a useful description of how to cook risotto—a delightful dish too rarely seen in England; an excellent chapter on the different kinds of salads, which should be carefully studied by those many hostesses whose imaginations never pass beyond lettuce and beetroot; and actually a recipe for making Brussels sprouts eatable. The last is, of course, a masterpiece.

The real difficulty that we all have to face in life is not so much the science of cookery as the stupidity of cooks. And in this little handbook to practical Epicureanism the tyrant of the English kitchen is shown in her proper light. Her entire ignorance of herbs, her passion for extracts and essences, her total inability to make a soup which is anything more than a combination of pepper and gravy, her inveterate habit of sending up bread poultices with pheasants,—all these sins and many others are ruthlessly unmasked by the author. Ruthlessly and rightly. For the British cook is a foolish woman who should be turned for her iniquities into a pillar of salt which she never knows how to use.

But our author is not local merely. He has been in many lands; he has eaten back-hendl at Vienna and kulibatsch at St. Petersburg; he has had the courage to face the buffalo veal of Roumania and to dine with a German family at one o'clock; he has

A MODERN EPIC

serious views on the right method of cooking those famous white truffles of Turin of which Alexandre Dumas was so fond ; and, in the face of the Oriental Club, declares that Bombay curry is better than the curry of Bengal. In fact he seems to have had experience of almost every kind of meal except the 'square meal' of the Americans. This he should study at once ; there is a great field for the philosophic epicure in the United States. Boston beans may be dismissed at once as delusions, but soft-shell crabs, terrapin, canvas-back ducks, blue fish and the pompono of New Orleans are all wonderful delicacies, particularly when one gets them at Delmonico's. Indeed, the two most remarkable bits of scenery in the States are undoubtedly Delmonico's and the Yosemite Valley ; and the former place has done more to promote a good feeling between England and America than anything else has in this century.

We hope the 'Wanderer' will go there soon and add a chapter to *Dinners and Dishes*, and that his book will have in England the influence it deserves. There are twenty ways of cooking a potato and three hundred and sixty-five ways of cooking an egg, yet the British cook, up to the present moment, knows only three methods of sending up either one or the other.

Dinners and Dishes. By 'Wanderer.' (Simpkin and Marshall.)

A MODERN EPIC

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 13, 1885.)

IN an age of hurry like ours the appearance of an epic poem more than five thousand lines in length cannot but be regarded as remarkable. Whether such a form of art is the one most suited

REVIEWS

to our century is a question. Edgar Allan Poe insisted that no poem should take more than an hour to read, the essence of a work of art being its unity of impression and of effect. Still, it would be difficult to accept absolutely a canon of art which would place the *Divine Comedy* on the shelf and deprive us of the *Bothwell* of Mr. Swinburne. A work of art is to be estimated by its beauty not by its size, and in Mr. Wills's *Melchior* there is beauty of a rich and lofty character.

Remembering the various arts which have yielded up their secrets to Mr. Wills, it is interesting to note in his poems, here the picturesque vision of the painter, here the psychology of the novelist, and here the playwright's sense of dramatic situation. Yet these things, which are the elements of his work of art though we arbitrarily separate them in criticism, are in the work itself blended and made one by the true imaginative and informing power. For *Melchior* is not a piece of poetic writing merely; it is that very rare thing, a poem.

It is dedicated to Mr. Robert Browning, not inappropriately, as it deals with that problem of the possible expression of life through music, the value of which as a motive in poetry Mr. Browning was the first to see. The story is this. In one of the little Gothic towns of Northern Germany lives Melchior, a dreamer and a musician. One night he rescues by chance a girl from drowning and lodges her in a convent of holy women. He grows to love her and to see in her the incarnation of that St. Cecily whom, with mystic and almost mediæval passion, he had before adored. But a priest separates them, and Melchior goes mad. An old doctor, who makes a study of insanity, determines to try and

A MODERN EPIC

cure him, and induces the girl to appear to him, disguised as St. Cecily herself, while he sits brooding at the organ. Thinking her at first to be indeed the Saint he had worshipped, Melchior falls in ecstasy at her feet, but soon discovering the trick kills her in a sudden paroxysm of madness. The horror of the act restores his reason; but, with the return of sanity, the dreams and visions of the artist's nature begin to vanish; the musician sees the world not through a glass but face to face, and he dies just as the world is awakening to his music.

The character of Melchior, who inherits his music from his father, and from his mother his mysticism, is extremely fascinating as a psychological study. Mr. Wills has made a most artistic use of that scientific law of heredity which has already strongly influenced the literature of this century, and to which we owe Dr. Holmes's fantastic *Elsie Venner*, *Daniel Deronda*—that dullest of masterpieces—and the dreadful Rougon-Macquart family with whose misdeeds M. Zola is never weary of troubling us.

Blanca, the girl, is a somewhat slight sketch, but then, like Ophelia, she is merely the occasion of a tragedy and not its heroine. The rest of the characters are most powerfully drawn and create themselves simply and swiftly before us as the story proceeds, the method of the practised dramatist being here of great value.

As regards the style, we notice some accidental assonances of rhyme which in an unrhymed poem are never pleasing; and the unfinished short line of five or six syllables, however legitimate on the stage where the actor himself can make the requisite musical pause, is not a beauty in a blank verse poem, and is employed by Mr. Wills far too

REVIEWS

frequently. Still, taken as a whole, the style has the distinction of noble melody.

There are many passages which, did space permit us, we would like to quote, but we must content ourselves with saying that in *Melchior* we find not merely pretty gems of rich imagery and delicate fancy, but a fine imaginative treatment of many of the most important modern problems, notably of the relation of life to art. It is a pleasure to herald a poem which combines so many elements of strength and beauty.

Melchior. By W. G. Wills, author of *Charles I.*, *Olivia, etc.*, and writer of *Claudian*. (Macmillan and Co.)

SHAKESPEARE ON SCENERY.

(*Dramatic Review*, March 14, 1885.)

I HAVE often heard people wonder what Shakespeare would say, could he see Mr. Irving's production of his *Much Ado About Nothing*, or Mr. Wilson Barrett's setting of his *Hamlet*. Would he take pleasure in the glory of the scenery and the marvel of the colour? Would he be interested in the Cathedral of Messina, and the battlements of Elsinore? Or would he be indifferent, and say the play, and the play only, is the thing?

Speculations like these are always pleasurable, and in the present case happen to be profitable also. For it is not difficult to see what Shakespeare's attitude would be; not difficult, that is to say, if one reads Shakespeare himself, instead of reading merely what is written about him.

SHAKESPEARE ON SCENERY

Speaking, for instance, directly, as the manager of a London theatre, through the lips of the chorus in *Henry V.*, he complains of the smallness of the stage on which he has to produce the pageant of a big historical play, and of the want of scenery which obliges him to cut out many of its most picturesque incidents, apologises for the scanty number of supers who had to play the soldiers, and for the shabbiness of the properties, and, finally, expresses his regret at being unable to bring on real horses.

In the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, again, he gives us a most amusing picture of the straits to which theatrical managers of his day were reduced by the want of proper scenery. In fact, it is impossible to read him without seeing that he is constantly protesting against the two special limitations of the Elizabethan stage—the lack of suitable scenery, and the fashion of men playing women's parts, just as he protests against other difficulties with which managers of theatres have still to contend, such as actors who do not understand their words; actors who miss their cues; actors who overact their parts; actors who mouth; actors who gag; actors who play to the gallery, and amateur actors.

And, indeed, a great dramatist, as he was, could not but have felt very much hampered at being obliged continually to interrupt the progress of a play in order to send on some one to explain to the audience that the scene was to be changed to a particular place on the entrance of a particular character, and after his exit to somewhere else; that the stage was to represent the deck of a ship in a storm, or the interior of a Greek temple, or the streets of a certain town, to all of which inartistic devices Shakespeare is reduced, and for which he always

REVIEWS

amply apologises. Besides this clumsy method, Shakespeare had two other substitutes for scenery—the hanging out of a placard, and his descriptions. The first of these could hardly have satisfied his passion for picturesqueness and his feeling for beauty, and certainly did not satisfy the dramatic critic of his day. But as regards the description, to those of us who look on Shakespeare not merely as a playwright but as a poet, and who enjoy reading him at home just as much as we enjoy seeing him acted, it may be a matter of congratulation that he had not at his command such skilled machinists as are in use now at the Princess's and at the Lyceum. For had Cleopatra's barge, for instance, been a structure of canvas and Dutch metal, it would probably have been painted over or broken up after the withdrawal of the piece, and, even had it survived to our own day, would, I am afraid, have become extremely shabby by this time. Whereas now the beaten gold of its poop is still bright, and the purple of its sails still beautiful; its silver oars are not tired of keeping time to the music of the flutes they follow, nor the Nereid's flower-soft hands of touching its silken tackle; the mermaid still lies at its helm, and still on its deck stand the boys with their coloured fans. Yet lovely as all Shakespeare's descriptive passages are, a description is in its essence undramatic. Theatrical audiences are far more impressed by what they look at than by what they listen to; and the modern dramatist, in having the surroundings of his play visibly presented to the audience when the curtain rises, enjoys an advantage for which Shakespeare often expresses his desire. It is true that Shakespeare's descriptions are not what descriptions are in modern plays—

SHAKESPEARE ON SCENERY

accounts of what the audience can observe for themselves; they are the imaginative method by which he creates in the mind of the spectators the image of that which he desires them to see. Still, the quality of the drama is action. It is always dangerous to pause for picturesqueness. And the introduction of self-explanatory scenery enables the modern method to be far more direct, while the loveliness of form and colour which it gives us, seems to me often to create an artistic temperament in the audience, and to produce that joy in beauty for beauty's sake, without which the great masterpieces of art can never be understood, to which, and to which only, are they ever revealed.

To talk of the passion of a play being hidden by the paint, and of sentiment being killed by scenery, is mere emptiness and folly of words. A noble play, nobly mounted, gives us double artistic pleasure. The eye as well as the ear is gratified, and the whole nature is made exquisitely receptive of the influence of imaginative work. And as regards a bad play, have we not all seen large audiences lured by the loveliness of scenic effect into listening to rhetoric posing as poetry, and to vulgarity doing duty for realism? Whether this be good or evil for the public I will not here discuss, but it is evident that the playwright, at any rate, never suffers.

Indeed, the artist who really has suffered through the modern mounting of plays is not the dramatist at all, but the scene-painter proper. He is rapidly being displaced by the stage-carpenter. Now and then, at Drury Lane, I have seen beautiful old front cloths let down, as perfect as pictures some of them, and pure painter's work, and there are many which we all remember at other theatres, in front of which

REVIEWS

some dialogue was reduced to graceful dumb-show through the hammer and tin-tacks behind. But as a rule the stage is overcrowded with enormous properties, which are not merely far more expensive and cumbersome than scene-paintings, but far less beautiful, and far less true. Properties kill perspective. A painted door is more like a real door than a real door is itself, for the proper conditions of light and shade can be given to it; and the excessive use of built up structures always makes the stage too glaring, for as they have to be lit from behind, as well as from the front, the gas-jets become the absolute light of the scene instead of the means merely by which we perceive the conditions of light and shadow which the painter has desired to show us.

So, instead of bemoaning the position of the playwright, it were better for the critics to exert whatever influence they may possess towards restoring the scene-painter to his proper position as an artist, and not allowing him to be built over by the property man, or hammered to death by the carpenter. I have never seen any reason myself why such artists as Mr. Beverley, Mr. Walter Hann, and Mr. Telbin should not be entitled to become Academicians. They have certainly as good a claim as have many of those R.A.'s whose total inability to paint we can see every May for a shilling.

And lastly, let those critics who hold up for our admiration the simplicity of the Elizabethan Stage, remember that they are lauding a condition of things against which Shakespeare himself, in the spirit of a true artist, always strongly protested.

A BEVY OF POETS

A BEVY OF POETS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 27, 1885.)

THIS spring the little singers are out before the little sparrows and have already begun chirruping. Here are four volumes already, and who knows how many more will be given to us before the laburnums blossom? The best-bound volume must, of course, have precedence. It is called *Echoes of Memory*, by Atherton Furlong, and is cased in creamy vellum and tied with ribbons of yellow silk. Mr. Furlong's charm is the unsullied sweetness of his simplicity. Indeed, we can strongly recommend to the School-Board the *Lines on the Old Town Pump* as eminently suitable for recitation by children. Such a verse, for instance, as :

I hear the little children say
(For the tale will never die)
How the old pump flowed both night and day
When the brooks and the wells ran dry,

has all the ring of Macaulay in it, and is a form of poetry which cannot possibly harm anybody, even if translated into French. Any inaccurate ideas of the laws of nature which the children might get from the passage in question could easily be corrected afterwards by a lecture on Hydrostatics. The poem, however, which gives us most pleasure is the one called *The Dear Old Knocker on the Door*. It is appropriately illustrated by Mr. Tristram Ellis. We quote the concluding verses of the first and last stanzas :

Blithe voices then so dear
Send up their shouts once more,
Then sounds again on mem'ry's ear
The dear old knocker on the door.

REVIEWS

When mem'ry turns the key
Where time has placed my score,
Encased 'mid treasured thoughts must be
The dear old knocker on the door.

The cynic may mock at the subject of these verses, but we do not. Why not an ode on a knocker? Does not Victor Hugo's tragedy of *Lucrèce Borgia* turn on the defacement of a doorplate? Mr. Furlong must not be discouraged. Perhaps he will write poetry some day. If he does we would earnestly appeal to him to give up calling a cock 'proud chanticleer.' Few synonyms are so depressing.

Having been lured by the Circe of a white vellum binding into the region of the pump and doormat, we turn to a modest little volume by Mr. Bowling of St. John's College, Cambridge, entitled *Sagittulæ*. And they are indeed delicate little arrows, for they are winged with the lightness of the lyric and barbed daintily with satire. *Æsthesis and Athletes* is a sweet idyll, and nothing can be more pathetic than the *Tragedy of the XIX. Century*, which tells of a luckless examiner condemned in his public capacity to pluck for her Little-go the girl graduate whom he privately adores. Girton seems to be having an important influence on the Cambridge school of poetry. We are not surprised. The Graces are the Graces always, even when they wear spectacles.

Then comes *Tuberose and Meadowsweet*, by Mr. Mark André Raffalovich. This is really a remarkable little volume, and contains many strange and beautiful poems. To say of these poems that they are unhealthy and bring with them the heavy odours of the hothouse is to point out neither their defect nor their merit, but their quality merely. And though Mr. Raffalovich is not a wonderful poet,

A BEVY OF POETS

still he is a subtle artist in poetry. Indeed, in his way he is a boyish master of curious music and of fantastic rhyme, and can strike on the lute of language so many lovely chords that it seems a pity he does not know how to pronounce the title of his book and the theme of his songs. For he insists on making 'tuberose' a trisyllable always, as if it were a potato blossom and not a flower shaped like a tiny trumpet of ivory. However, for the sake of his meadowsweet and his spring-green binding this must be forgiven him. And though he cannot pronounce 'tuberose' aright, at least he can sing of it exquisitely.

Finally we come to *Sturm und Drang*, the work of an anonymous writer. Opening the volume at hazard we come across these graceful lines :

How sweet to spend in this blue bay
The close of life's disastrous day,
To watch the morn break faintly free
Across the greyness of the sea,
What time Memnonian music fills
The shadows of the dewy hills.

Well, here is the touch of a poet, and we pluck up heart and read on. The book is a curious but not inartistic combination of the mental attitude of Mr. Matthew Arnold with the style of Lord Tennyson. Sometimes, as in *The Sicilian Hermit*, we get merely the metre of *Locksley Hall* without its music, merely its fine madness and not its fine magic. Still, elsewhere there is good work, and *Caliban in East London* has a great deal of power in it, though we do not like the adjective 'knockery' even in a poem on Whitechapel.

On the whole, to those who watch the culture of the age, the most interesting thing in young poets is

REVIEWS

not so much what they invent as what masters they follow. A few years ago it was all Mr. Swinburne. That era has happily passed away. The mimicry of passion is the most intolerable of all poses. Now, it is all Lord Tennyson, and that is better. For a young writer can gain more from the study of a literary poet than from the study of a lyrist. He may become the pupil of the one, but he can never be anything but the slave of the other. And so we are glad to see in this volume direct and noble praise of him

Who plucked in English meadows flowers fair
As any that in unforgotten stave
Vied with the orient gold of Venus' hair
Or fringed the murmur of the Ægean wave,

which are the fine words in which this anonymous poet pays his tribute to the Laureate.

- (1) *Echoes of Memory*. By Atherton Furlong. (Field and Tuer.)
- (2) *Sagittulæ*. By E. W. Bowling. (Longmans, Green and Co.)
- (3) *Tuberose and Meadowsweet*. By Mark André Raffalovich. (David Bogue.)
- (4) *Sturm und Drang*. (Elliot Stock.)

In reply to the review *A Bevy of Poets* the following letter was published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on March 30, 1885, under the title of

THE ROOT OF THE MATTER

SIR,—I am sorry not to be able to accept the graceful etymology of your reviewer who calls me to task for not knowing how to pronounce the title of my book *Tuberose and Meadowsweet*. I insist, he fancifully says, 'on making "tuberose" a trisyllable always, as if it were a potato blossom and not a flower shaped like a tiny trumpet of ivory.' Alas! tuberose is a trisyllable if properly derived from the Latin *tuberosus*, the lumpy flower, having nothing to do with roses or with trumpets of ivory in name any more than in nature.

PARNASSUS *VERSUS* PHILOLOGY

I am reminded by a great living poet that another correctly wrote :

Or as the moonlight fills the open sky
Struggling with darkness—as a tuberose
Peoples some Indian dell with scents which lie

Like clouds above the flower from which they rose.

In justice to Shelley, whose lines I quote, your readers will admit that I have good authority for making a trisyllable of tuberose.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

ANDRÉ RAFFALOVICH.

March 28.

PARNASSUS *VERSUS* PHILOLOGY

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 1, 1885.)

To the Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

SIR,—I am deeply distressed to hear that tuberose is so called from its being a ‘lumpy flower.’ It is not at all lumpy, and, even if it were, no poet should be heartless enough to say so. Henceforth, there really must be two derivations for every word, one for the poet and one for the scientist. And in the present case the poet will dwell on the tiny trumpets of ivory into which the white flower breaks, and leave to the man of science horrid allusions to its supposed lumpiness and indiscreet revelations of its private life below ground. In fact, ‘tuber’ as a derivation is disgraceful. On the roots of verbs Philology may be allowed to speak, but on the roots of flowers she must keep silence. We cannot allow her to dig up Parnassus. And, as regards the word being a trisyllable, I am reminded by a great living poet that another correctly wrote :

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose,
The sweetest flower for scent that blows;
And all rare blossoms from every clime
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

REVIEWS

In justice to Shelley, whose lines I quote, your readers will admit that I have good authority for making a dissyllable of *tubero*se.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

THE CRITIC,
WHO HAD TO READ FOUR VOLUMES
OF MODERN POETRY.

March 30.

HAMLET AT THE LYCEUM

(*Dramatic Review*, May 9, 1885.)

IT sometimes happens that at a *première* in London the least enjoyable part of the performance is the play. I have seen many audiences more interesting than the actors, and have often heard better dialogue in the *foyer* than I have on the stage. At the Lyceum, however, this is rarely the case, and when the play is a play of Shakespeare's, and among its exponents are Mr. Irving and Miss Ellen Terry, we turn from the gods in the gallery and from the goddesses in the stalls, to enjoy the charm of the production, and to take delight in the art. The lions are behind the foot-lights and not in front of them when we have a noble tragedy nobly acted. And I have rarely witnessed such enthusiasm as that which greeted on last Saturday night the two artists I have mentioned. I would like, in fact, to use the word *ovation*, but a pedantic professor has recently informed us, with the Batavian buoyancy of misapplied learning, that this expression is not to be employed except when a sheep has been sacrificed. At the Lyceum last week I need hardly say nothing so dreadful occurred. The only inartistic incident of the evening was the hurling of a bouquet from a box at Mr. Irving while he was engaged in *pourtraying* the agony of Hamlet's

HAMLET AT THE LYCEUM

death, and the pathos of his parting with Horatio. The Dramatic College might take up the education of spectators as well as that of players, and teach people that there is a proper moment for the throwing of flowers as well as a proper method.

As regards Mr. Irving's own performance, it has been already so elaborately criticised and described, from his business with the supposed pictures in the closet scene down to his use of 'peacock' for 'paddock,' that little remains to be said; nor, indeed, does a Lyceum audience require the interposition of the dramatic critic in order to understand or to appreciate the Hamlet of this great actor. I call him a great actor because he brings to the interpretation of a work of art the two qualities which we in this century so much desire, the qualities of personality and of perfection. A few years ago it seemed to many, and perhaps rightly, that the personality overshadowed the art. No such criticism would be fair now. The somewhat harsh angularity of movement and faulty pronunciation have been replaced by exquisite grace of gesture and clear precision of word, where such precision is necessary. For delightful as good elocution is, few things are so depressing as to hear a passionate passage recited instead of being acted. The quality of a fine performance is its life more than its learning, and every word in a play has a musical as well as an intellectual value, and must be made expressive of a certain emotion. So it does not seem to me that in all parts of a play perfect pronunciation is necessarily dramatic. When the words are 'wild and whirling,' the expression of them must be wild and whirling also. Mr. Irving, I think, manages his voice with singular art; it was impossible to discern a false note

REVIEWS

or wrong intonation in his dialogue or his soliloquies, and his strong dramatic power, his realistic power as an actor, is as effective as ever. A great critic at the beginning of this century said that Hamlet is the most difficult part to personate on the stage, that it is like the attempt to 'embody a shadow.' I cannot say that I agree with this idea. Hamlet seems to me essentially a good acting part, and in Mr. Irving's performance of it there is that combination of poetic grace with absolute reality which is so eternally delightful. Indeed, if the words easy and difficult have any meaning at all in matters of art, I would be inclined to say that Ophelia is the more difficult part. She has, I mean, less material by which to produce her effects. She is the occasion of the tragedy, but she is neither its heroine nor its chief victim. She is swept away by circumstances, and gives the opportunity for situation, of which she is not herself the climax, and which she does not herself command. And of all the parts which Miss Terry has acted in her brilliant career, there is none in which her infinite powers of pathos and her imaginative and creative faculty are more shown than in her Ophelia. Miss Terry is one of those rare artists who needs for her dramatic effect no elaborate dialogue, and for whom the simplest words are sufficient. 'I love you not,' says Hamlet, and all that Ophelia answers is, 'I was the more deceived.' These are not very grand words to read, but as Miss Terry gave them in acting they seemed to be the highest possible expression of Ophelia's character. Beautiful, too, was the quick remorse she conveyed by her face and gesture the moment she had lied to Hamlet and told him her father was at home. This I thought a masterpiece of good acting, and her mad

HAMLET AT THE LYCEUM

scene was wonderful beyond all description. The secrets of Melpomene are known to Miss Terry as well as the secrets of Thalia. As regards the rest of the company there is always a high standard at the Lyceum, but some particular mention should be made of Mr. Alexander's brilliant performance of Laertes. Mr. Alexander has a most effective presence, a charming voice, and a capacity for wearing lovely costumes with ease and elegance. Indeed, in the latter respect his only rival was Mr. Norman Forbes, who played either Guildenstern or Rosencrantz very gracefully. I believe one of our budding Hazlitts is preparing a volume to be entitled 'Great Guildensterns and Remarkable Rosencrantzes,' but I have never been able myself to discern any difference between these two characters. They are, I think, the only characters Shakespeare has not cared to individualise. Whichever of the two, however, Mr. Forbes acted, he acted it well. Only one point in Mr. Alexander's performance seemed to me open to question, that was his kneeling during the whole of Polonius's speech. For this I see no necessity at all, and it makes the scene look less natural than it should—gives it, I mean, too formal an air. However, the performance was most spirited and gave great pleasure to every one. Mr. Alexander is an artist from whom much will be expected, and I have no doubt he will give us much that is fine and noble. He seems to have all the qualifications for a good actor.

There is just one other character I should like to notice. The First Player seemed to me to act far too well. He should act very badly. The First Player, besides his position in the dramatic evolution of the tragedy, is Shakespeare's caricature of the ranting

REVIEWS

actor of his day, just as the passage he recites is Shakespeare's own parody on the dull plays of some of his rivals. The whole point of Hamlet's advice to the players seems to me to be lost unless the Player himself has been guilty of the fault which Hamlet reprehends, unless he has sawn the air with his hand, mouthed his lines, torn his passion to tatters, and out-Heroded Herod. The very sensibility which Hamlet notices in the actor, such as his real tears and the like, is not the quality of a good artist. The part should be played after the manner of a provincial tragedian. It is meant to be a satire, and to play it well is to play it badly. The scenery and costumes were excellent with the exception of the King's dress, which was coarse in colour and tawdry in effect. And the Player Queen should have come in boy's attire to Elsinore.

However, last Saturday night was not a night for criticism. The theatre was filled with those who desired to welcome Mr. Irving back to his own theatre, and we were all delighted at his re-appearance among us. I hope that some time will elapse before he and Miss Terry cross again that disappointing Atlantic Ocean.

TWO NEW NOVELS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, May 15, 1885.)

THE clever authoress of *In the Golden Days* has chosen for the scene of her story the England of two centuries ago, as a relief, she tells us in her preface, 'from perpetual nineteenth-centuryism.' Upon the other hand, she makes a pathetic appeal to her readers not to regard her book as an 'historical novel,' on the ground

TWO NEW NOVELS

that such a title strikes terror into the public. This seems to us rather a curious position to take up. *Esmond* and *Notre Dame* are historical novels, both of them, and both of them popular successes. *John Inglesant* and *Romola* have gone through many editions, and even *Salamambo* has its enthusiasts. We think that the public is very fond of historical novels, and as for perpetual 'nineteenth-centuryism'—a vile phrase, by the way—we only wish that more of our English novelists studied our age and its society than do so at present. However, *In the Golden Days* must not be judged by its foolish preface. It is really a very charming book, and though Dryden, Betterton, and Wills's Coffee-House are dragged in rather *à propos de bottes*, still the picture of the time is well painted. Joyce, the little Puritan maiden, is an exquisite creation, and Hugo Wharncliffe, her lover, makes a fine hero. The sketch of Algernon Sidney is rather colourless, but Charles II. is well drawn. It seems to be a novel with a high purpose and a noble meaning. Yet it is never dull.

Mrs. Macquoid's *Louisa* is modern and the scene is in Italy. Italy, we fear, has been a good deal overdone in fiction. A little more Piccadilly and a little less Perugia would be a relief. However, the story is interesting. A young English girl marries an Italian nobleman and, after some time, being bored with picturesqueness, falls in love with an Englishman. The story is told with a great deal of power and ends properly and pleasantly. It can safely be recommended to young persons.

(1) *In the Golden Days*. By Edna Lyall, Author of *We Two*, *Donovan*, etc. (Hurst and Blackett.)

(2) *Louisa*. By Katherine S. Macquoid. (Bentley and Son.)

REVIEWS

HENRY THE FOURTH AT OXFORD

(*Dramatic Review*, May 23, 1885.)

I HAVE been told that the ambition of every Dramatic Club is to act *Henry IV.* I am not surprised. The spirit of comedy is as fervent in this play as is the spirit of chivalry; it is an heroic pageant as well as an heroic poem, and like most of Shakespeare's historical dramas it contains an extraordinary number of thoroughly good acting parts, each of which is absolutely individual in character, and each of which contributes to the evolution of the plot.

Rumour, from time to time, has brought in tidings of a proposed production by the banks of the Cam, but it seems at the last moment *Box and Cox* has always had to be substituted in the bill.

To Oxford belongs the honour of having been the first to present on the stage this noble play, and the production which I saw last week was in every way worthy of that lovely town, that mother of sweetness and of light. For, in spite of the roaring of the young lions at the Union, and the screaming of the rabbits in the home of the vivisector, in spite of Keble College, and the tramways, and the sporting prints, Oxford still remains the most beautiful thing in England, and nowhere else are life and art so exquisitely blended, so perfectly made one. Indeed, in most other towns art has often to present herself in the form of a reaction against the sordid ugliness of ignoble lives, but at Oxford she comes to us as an exquisite flower born of the beauty of life and expressive of life's joy. She finds her home by the Isis as once she did by the Ilissus; the Magdalen walks and the Magdalen cloisters are as dear to her

HENRY IV. AT OXFORD

as were ever the silver olives of Colonus and the golden gateway of the house of Pallas: she covers with fanlike tracery the vaulted entrance to Christ Church Hall, and looks out from the windows of Merton; her feet have stirred the Cumnor cowslips, and she gathers fritillaries in the river-fields. To her the clamour of the schools and the dulness of the lecture-room are a weariness and a vexation of spirit; she seeks not to define virtue, and cares little for the categories; she smiles on the swift athlete whose plastic grace has pleased her, and rejoices in the young Barbarians at their games; she watches the rowers from the reedy bank and gives myrtle to her lovers, and laurel to her poets, and rue to those who talk wisely in the street; she makes the earth lovely to all who dream with Keats; she opens high heaven to all who soar with Shelley; and turning away her head from pedant, proctor and Philistine, she has welcomed to her shrine a band of youthful actors, knowing that they have sought with much ardour for the stern secret of Melpomene, and caught with much gladness the sweet laughter of Thalia. And to me this ardour and this gladness were the two most fascinating qualities of the Oxford performance, as indeed they are qualities which are necessary to any fine dramatic production. For without quick and imaginative observation of life the most beautiful play becomes dull in presentation, and what is not conceived in delight by the actor can give no delight at all to others.

I know that there are many who consider that Shakespeare is more for the study than for the stage. With this view I do not for a moment agree. Shakespeare wrote the plays to be acted, and we have no right to alter the form which he himself selected for

REVIEWS

the full expression of his work. Indeed, many of the beauties of that work can be adequately conveyed to us only through the actor's art. As I sat in the Town Hall of Oxford the other night, the majesty of the mighty lines of the play seemed to me to gain new music from the clear young voices that uttered them, and the ideal grandeur of the heroism to be made more real to the spectators by the chivalrous bearing, the noble gesture and the fine passion of its exponents. Even the dresses had their dramatic value. Their archæological accuracy gave us, immediately on the rise of the curtain, a perfect picture of the time. As the knights and nobles moved across the stage in the flowing robes of peace and in the burnished steel of battle, we needed no dreary chorus to tell us in what age or land the play's action was passing, for the fifteenth century in all the dignity and grace of its apparel was living actually before us, and the delicate harmonies of colour struck from the first a dominant note of beauty which added to the intellectual realism of archæology the sensuous charm of art.

As for individual actors, Mr. Mackinnon's Prince Hal was a most gay and graceful performance, lit here and there with charming touches of princely dignity and of noble feeling. Mr. Coleridge's Falstaff was full of delightful humour, though perhaps at times he did not take us sufficiently into his confidence. An audience looks at a tragedian, but a comedian looks at his audience. However, he gave much pleasure to every one, and Mr. Bouchier's Hotspur was really most remarkable. Mr. Bouchier has a fine stage presence, a beautiful voice, and produces his effects by a method as dramatically impressive as it is artistically right. Once or twice

HENRY IV. AT OXFORD

he seemed to me to spoil his last line by walking through it. The part of Harry Percy is one full of climaxes which must not be let slip. But still there was always a freedom and spirit in his style which was very pleasing, and his delivery of the colloquial passages I thought excellent, notably of that in the first act :

What d' ye call the place ?

A plague upon 't—it is in Gloucestershire ;

'Twas where the madcap duke his uncle kept,

His uncle York ;

lines by the way in which Kemble made a great effect. Mr. Bouchier has the opportunity of a fine career on the English stage, and I hope he will take advantage of it. Among the minor parts in the play Glendower, Mortimer and Sir Richard Vernon were capitally acted, Worcester was a performance of some subtlety, Mrs. Woods was a charming Lady Percy, and Lady Edward Spencer Churchill, as Mortimer's wife, made us all believe that we understood Welsh. Her dialogue and her song were most pleasing bits of artistic realism which fully accounted for the Celtic chair at Oxford.

But though I have mentioned particular actors, the real value of the whole representation was to be found in its absolute unity, in its delicate sense of proportion, and in that breadth of effect which is to be got only by the most careful elaboration of detail. I have rarely seen a production better stage-managed. Indeed, I hope that the University will take some official notice of this delightful work of art. Why should not degrees be granted for good acting ? Are they not given to those who misunderstand Plato and who mistranslate Aristotle ? And should the artist be passed over ? No. To

REVIEWS

Prince Hal, Hotspur and Falstaff, D.C.L.'s should be gracefully offered. I feel sure they would be gracefully accepted. To the rest of the company the crimson or the sheep-skin hood might be assigned *honoris causâ* to the eternal confusion of the Philistine, and the rage of the industrious and the dull. Thus would Oxford confer honour on herself, and the artist be placed in his proper position. However, whether or not Convocation recognises the claims of culture, I hope that the Oxford Dramatic Society will produce every summer for us some noble play like *Henry IV*. For, in plays of this kind, plays which deal with bygone times, there is always this peculiar charm, that they combine in one exquisite presentation the passions that are living with the picturesqueness that is dead. And when we have the modern spirit given to us in an antique form, the very remoteness of that form can be made a method of increased realism. This was Shakespeare's own attitude towards the ancient world, this is the attitude we in this century should adopt towards his plays, and with a feeling akin to this it seemed to me that these brilliant young Oxonians were working. If it was so, their aim is the right one. For while we look to the dramatist to give romance to realism, we ask of the actor to give realism to romance.

MODERN GREEK POETRY

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, May 27, 1885.)

ODYSSEUS, not Achilles, is the type of the modern Greek. Merchandise has taken precedence of the Muses and politics are preferred to Parnassus. Yet by the Illissus there

MODERN GREEK POETRY

are sweet singers; the nightingales are not silent in Colonus; and from the garden of Greek nineteenth-century poetry Miss Edmonds has made a very pleasing anthology; and in pouring the wine from the golden into the silver cup she has still kept much of the beauty of the original. Even when translated into English, modern Greek lyrics are preferable to modern Greek loans.

As regards the quality of this poetry, if the old Greek spirit can be traced at all, it is the spirit of Tyrtaeus and of Theocritus. The warlike ballads of Rhigas and Aristotle Valaôritês have a fine ring of music and of passion in them, and the folk-songs of George Drosinês are full of charming pictures of rustic life and delicate idylls of shepherds' courtships. These we acknowledge that we prefer. The flutes of the sheepfold are more delightful than the clarions of battle. Still, poetry played such a noble part in the Greek War of Independence that it is impossible not to look with reverence on the spirited war-songs that meant so much to those who were fighting for liberty and mean so much even now to their children.

Other poets besides Drosinês have taken the legends that linger among the peasants and given to them an artistic form. The song of *The Seasons* is full of beauty, and there is a delightful poem on *The Building of St. Sophia*, which tells how the design of that noble building was suggested by the golden honeycomb of a bee which had flown from the king's palace with a crumb of blessed bread that had fallen from the king's hands. The story is still to be found in Thrace.

One of the ballads, also, has a good deal of spirit. It is by Kostês Palamas and was suggested by an

REVIEWS

interesting incident which occurred some years ago in Athens. In the summer of 1881 there was borne through the streets the remains of an aged woman in the complete costume of a Pallikar, which dress she had worn at the siege of Missolonghi and in it had requested to be buried. The life of this real Greek heroine should be studied by those who are investigating the question of wherein womanliness consists. The view the poet takes of her is, we need hardly say, very different from that which Canon Liddon would entertain. Yet it is none the less fine on this account, and we are glad that this old lady has been given a place in art. The volume is, on the whole, delightful reading, and though not much can be said for lines like these :

There cometh from the West
The timid starry bands,

still, the translations are in many instances most felicitous and their style most pleasing.

Greek Lays, Idylls, Legends, etc. Translated by E. M. Edmonds.
(Trübner and Co.)

OLIVIA AT THE LYCEUM

(*Dramatic Review*, May 30, 1885.)

WHETHER or not it is an advantage for a novel to be produced in a dramatic form is, I think, open to question. The psychological analysis of such work as that of Mr. George Meredith, for instance, would probably lose by being transmuted into the passionate action of the stage, nor does M. Zola's *formule scientifique* gain anything at all by theatrical presentation. With Goldsmith it is somewhat different. In *The Vicar of*

OLIVIA AT THE LYCEUM

Wakefield he seeks simply to please his readers, and desires not to prove a theory; he looks on life rather as a picture to be painted than as a problem to be solved; his aim is to create men and women more than to vivisection them; his dialogue is essentially dramatic, and his novel seems to pass naturally into the dramatic form. And to me there is something very pleasurable in seeing and studying the same subject under different conditions of art. For life remains eternally unchanged; it is art which, by presenting it to us under various forms, enables us to realise its many-sided mysteries, and to catch the quality of its most fiery-coloured moments. The originality, I mean, which we ask from the artist, is originality of treatment, not of subject. It is only the unimaginative who ever invents. The true artist is known by the use he makes of what he annexes, and he annexes everything.

Looking in this light at Mr. Wills's *Olivia*, it seems to me a very exquisite work of art. Indeed, I know no other dramatist who could have re-told this beautiful English tale with such tenderness and such power, neither losing the charm of the old story nor forgetting the conditions of the new form. The sentiment of the poet and the science of the playwright are exquisitely balanced in it. For though in prose it is a poem, and while a poem it is also a play.

But fortunate as Mr. Wills has been in the selection of his subject and in his treatment of it, he is no less fortunate in the actors who interpret his work. To whatever character Miss Terry plays she brings the infinite charm of her beauty, and the marvellous grace of her movements and gestures. It is impossible to escape from the sweet tyranny

REVIEWS

of her personality. She dominates her audience by the secret of Cleopatra. In her Olivia, however, it is not merely her personality that fascinates us but her power also, her power over pathos, and her command of situation. The scene in which she bade goodbye to her family was touching beyond any scene I remember in any modern play, yet no harsh or violent note was sounded; and when in the succeeding act she struck, in natural and noble indignation, the libertine who had betrayed her, there was, I think, no one in the theatre who did not recognise that in Miss Terry our stage possesses a really great artist, who can thrill an audience without harrowing it, and by means that seem simple and easy can produce the finest dramatic effect. Mr. Irving, as Dr. Primrose, intensified the beautiful and blind idolatry of the old pastor for his daughter till his own tragedy seems almost greater than hers; the scene in the third act, where he breaks down in his attempt to reprove the lamb that has strayed from the fold, was a masterpiece of fine acting; and the whole performance, while carefully elaborate in detail, was full of breadth and dignity. I acknowledge that I liked him least at the close of the second act. It seems to me that here we should be made to feel not merely the passionate rage of the father, but the powerlessness of the old man. The taking down of the pistols, and the attempt to follow the young duellist, are pathetic because they are useless, and I hardly think that Mr. Irving conveyed this idea. As regards the rest of the characters, Mr. Terriss's Squire Thornhill was an admirable picture of a fascinating young rake. Indeed, it was so fascinating that the moral equilibrium of the audience was quite disturbed, and nobody seemed to care very

OLIVIA AT THE LYCEUM

much for the virtuous Mr. Burchell. I was not sorry to see this triumph of the artistic over the ethical sympathy. Perfect heroes are the monsters of melodramas, and have no place in dramatic art. Life possibly contains them, but Parnassus often rejects what Peckham may welcome. I look forward to a reaction in favour of the cultured criminal. Mr. Norman Forbes was a very pleasing Moses, and gave his Latin quotations charmingly, Miss Emery's Sophy was most winning, and, indeed, every part seemed to me well acted except that of the virtuous Mr. Burchell. This fact, however, rather pleased me than otherwise, as it increased the charm of his attractive nephew.

The scenery and costumes were excellent, as indeed they always are at the Lyceum when the piece is produced under Mr. Irving's direction. The first scene was really very beautiful, and quite as good as the famous cherry orchard of the Théâtre Français. A critic who posed as an authority on field sports assured me that no one ever went out hunting when roses were in full bloom. Personally, that is exactly the season I would select for the chase, but then I know more about flowers than I do about foxes, and like them much better. If the critic was right, either the roses must wither or Squire Thornhill must change his coat. A more serious objection may be brought against the division of the last act into three scenes. There, I think, there was a distinct dramatic loss. The room to which Olivia returns should have been exactly the same room she had left. As a picture of the eighteenth century, however, the whole production was admirable, and the details, both of acting and of *mise-en-scène*, wonderfully perfect. I wish Olivia would take off

REVIEWS

her pretty mittens when her fortune is being told. Cheiromancy is a science which deals almost entirely with the lines on the palm of the hand, and mittens would seriously interfere with its mysticism. Still, when all is said, how easily does this lovely play, this artistic presentation, survive criticisms founded on cheiromancy and cub-hunting! The Lyceum under Mr. Irving's management has become a centre of art. We are all of us in his debt. I trust that we may see some more plays by living dramatists produced at his theatre, for *Olivia* has been exquisitely mounted and exquisitely played.

AS YOU LIKE IT AT COOMBE HOUSE

(*Dramatic Review*, June 6, 1885.)

IN Théophile Gautier's first novel, that golden book of spirit and sense, that holy writ of beauty, there is a most fascinating account of an amateur performance of *As You Like It* in the large orangery of a French country house. Yet, lovely as Gautier's description is, the real presentation of the play last week at Coombe seemed to me lovelier still, for not merely were there present in it all those elements of poetry and picturesqueness which *le maître impeccable* so desired, but to them was added also the exquisite charm of the open woodland and the delightful freedom of the open air. Nor indeed could the Pastoral Players have made a more fortunate selection of a play. A tragedy under the same conditions would have been impossible. For tragedy is the exaggeration of the individual, and nature thinks nothing of dwarfing a hero by a holly bush, and reducing a heroine to a

AS YOU LIKE IT AT COOMBE HOUSE

mere effect of colour. The subtleties also of facial expression are in the open air almost entirely lost; and while this would be a serious defect in the presentation of a play which deals immediately with psychology, in the case of a comedy, where the situations predominate over the characters, we do not feel it nearly so much; and Shakespeare himself seems to have clearly recognised this difference, for while he had *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* always played by artificial light he acted *As You Like It* and the rest of his comedies *en plein jour*.

The condition then under which this comedy was produced by Lady Archibald Campbell and Mr. Godwin did not place any great limitations on the actor's art, and increased tenfold the value of the play as a picture. Through an alley of white hawthorn and gold laburnum we passed into the green pavilion that served as the theatre, the air sweet with odour of the lilac and with the blackbird's song; and when the curtain fell into its trench of flowers, and the play commenced, we saw before us a real forest, and we knew it to be Arden. For with whoop and shout, up through the rustling fern came the foresters trooping, the banished Duke took his seat beneath the tall elm, and as his lords lay around him on the grass, the rich melody of Shakespeare's blank verse began to reach our ears. And all through the performance this delightful sense of joyous woodland life was sustained, and even when the scene was left empty for the shepherd to drive his flock across the sward, or for Rosalind to school Orlando in love-making, far away we could hear the shrill halloo of the hunter, and catch now and then the faint music of some distant horn. One distinct dramatic advantage was gained by the *mise en scène*.

REVIEWS

The abrupt exits and entrances, which are necessitated on the real stage by the inevitable limitations of space, were in many cases done away with, and we saw the characters coming gradually towards us through brake and underwood, or passing away down the slope till they were lost in some deep recess of the forest; the effect of distance thus gained being largely increased by the faint wreaths of blue mist that floated at times across the background. Indeed I never saw an illustration at once so perfect and so practical of the æsthetic value of smoke.

As for the players themselves, the pleasing naturalness of their method harmonised delightfully with their natural surroundings. Those of them who were amateurs were too artistic to be stagey, and those who were actors too experienced to be artificial. The humorous sadness of Jaques, that philosopher in search of sensation, found a perfect exponent in Mr. Hermann Vezin. Touchstone has been so often acted as a low comedy part that Mr. Elliott's rendering of the swift sententious fool was a welcome change, and a more graceful and winning Phebe than Mrs. Plowden, a more tender Celia than Miss Schletter, a more realistic Audrey than Miss Fulton, I have never seen. Rosalind suffered a good deal through the omission of the first act; we saw, I mean, more of the saucy boy than we did of the noble girl; and though the *persiflage* always told, the poetry was often lost; still Miss Calhoun gave much pleasure; and Lady Archibald Campbell's Orlando was a really remarkable performance. Too melancholy some seemed to think it. Yet is not Orlando lovesick? Too dreamy, I heard it said. Yet Orlando is a poet. And even admitting that the vigour of the lad who tripped up the Duke's

AS YOU LIKE IT AT COOMBE HOUSE

wrestler was hardly sufficiently emphasised, still in the low music of Lady Archibald Campbell's voice, and in the strange beauty of her movements and gestures, there was a wonderful fascination, and the visible presence of romance quite consoled me for the possible absence of robustness. Among the other characters should be mentioned Mr. Claude Ponsonby's First Lord, Mr. De Cordova's Corin (a bit of excellent acting), and the Silvius of Mr. Webster.

As regards the costumes the colour scheme was very perfect. Brown and green were the dominant notes, and yellow was most artistically used. There were, however, two distinct discords. Touchstone's motley was far too glaring, and the crude white of Rosalind's bridal raiment in the last act was absolutely displeasing. A contrast may be striking but should never be harsh. And lovely in colour as Mrs. Plowden's dress was, a sort of panegyric on a pansy, I am afraid that in Shakespeare's Arden there were no Chelsea China Shepherdesses, and I am sure that the romance of Phebe does not need to be intensified by any reminiscences of porcelain. Still, *As You Like It* has probably never been so well mounted, nor costumes worn with more ease and simplicity. Not the least charming part of the whole production was the music, which was under the direction of the Rev. Arthur Batson. The boys' voices were quite exquisite, and Mr. Walsham sang with much spirit.

On the whole the Pastoral Players are to be warmly congratulated on the success of their representation, and to the artistic sympathies of Lady Archibald Campbell, and the artistic knowledge of Mr. Godwin, I am indebted for a most delightful

REVIEWS

afternoon. Few things are so pleasurable as to be able by an hour's drive to exchange Piccadilly for Parnassus.

A HANDBOOK TO MARRIAGE

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, November 18, 1885.)

IN spite of its somewhat alarming title this book may be highly recommended to every one. As for the authorities the author quotes, they are almost numberless, and range from Socrates down to Artemus Ward. He tells us of the wicked bachelor who spoke of marriage as 'a very harmless amusement' and advised a young friend of his to 'marry early and marry often'; of Dr. Johnson who proposed that marriage should be arranged by the Lord Chancellor, without the parties concerned having any choice in the matter; of the Sussex labourer who asked, 'Why should I give a woman half my victuals for cooking the other half?' and of Lord Verulam who thought that unmarried men did the best public work. And, indeed, marriage is the one subject on which all women agree and all men disagree. Our author, however, is clearly of the same opinion as the Scotch lassie who, on her father warning her what a solemn thing it was to get married, answered, 'I ken that, father, but it's a great deal solemnner to be single.' He may be regarded as the champion of the married life. Indeed, he has a most interesting chapter on marriage-made men, and though he dissents, and we think rightly, from the view recently put forward by a lady or two on the Women's Rights platform that Solomon owed all his wisdom to the number of his wives, still he appeals to Bismarck, John Stuart Mill, Mahommed

A HANDBOOK TO MARRIAGE

and Lord Beaconsfield, as instances of men whose success can be traced to the influence of the women they married. Archbishop Whately once defined woman as 'a creature that does not reason and pokes the fire from the top,' but since his day the higher education of women has considerably altered their position. Women have always had an emotional sympathy with those they love; Girton and Newnham have rendered intellectual sympathy also possible. In our day it is best for a man to be married, and men must give up the tyranny in married life which was once so dear to them, and which, we are afraid, lingers still, here and there.

'Do you wish to be my wife, Mabel?' said a little boy. 'Yes,' incautiously answered Mabel. 'Then pull off my boots.'

On marriage vows our author has, too, very sensible views and very amusing stories. He tells of a nervous bridegroom who, confusing the baptismal and marriage ceremonies, replied when asked if he consented to take the bride for his wife: 'I renounce them all'; of a Hampshire rustic who, when giving the ring, said solemnly to the bride: 'With my body I thee wash up, and with all my hurdle goods I thee and thou'; of another who, when asked whether he would take his partner to be his wedded wife, replied with shameful indecision: 'Yes, I'm willin'; but I'd a sight rather have her sister'; and of a Scotch lady who, on the occasion of her daughter's wedding, was asked by an old friend whether she might congratulate her on the event, and answered: 'Yes, yes, upon the whole it is very satisfactory; it is true Jeannie hates her gudeman, but then there's always a something!' Indeed, the good stories contained in this book are quite endless and make it very

REVIEWS

pleasant reading, while the good advice is on all points admirable.

Most young married people nowadays start in life with a dreadful collection of ormolu inkstands covered with sham onyxes, or with a perfect museum of salt-cellar. We strongly recommend this book as one of the best of wedding presents. It is a complete handbook to an earthly Paradise, and its author may be regarded as the Murray of matrimony and the Baedeker of bliss.

How to be Happy though Married: Being a Handbook to Marriage.
By a Graduate in the University of Matrimony. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

HALF-HOURS WITH THE WORST AUTHORS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, January 15, 1886.)

I AM very much pleased to see that you are beginning to call attention to the extremely slipshod and careless style of our ordinary magazine-writers. Will you allow me to refer your readers to an article on Borrow, in the current number of *Macmillan*, which exemplifies very clearly the truth of your remarks? The author of the article is Mr. George Saintsbury, a gentleman who has recently written a book on Prose Style, and here are some specimens of the prose of the future according to the *système Saintsbury*:

1. He saw the rise, and, *in some instances, the death, of Tennyson, Thackeray, Macaulay, Carlyle, Dickens.*

2. *See a place which Kingsley, or Mr. Ruskin, or some other master of our decorative school, have described—much more one which has fallen into the hands of the small fry of their imitators—and you are almost sure to find that it has been overdone.*

HALF-HOURS WITH WORST AUTHORS

3. The great mass of his translations, published and unpublished, and the smaller mass of his early hackwork, no doubt *deserves* judicious excerpion.

4. 'The Romany Rye' *did not appear* for six years, *that is to say*, in 1857.

5. The elaborate apparatus which most prose tellers of fantastic tales *use*, and generally *fail in using*.

6. The great writers, whether they try to be like other people or try not to be like them (*and sometimes in the first case most of all*), succeed *only* in being themselves.

7. If he had a slight *overdose* of Celtic blood and Celtic peculiarity, it was *more than made up* by the readiness of literary expression which it gave him. He, if any one, bore an English heart, though, *as there often has been*, there was something perhaps more than English as well as less than it in his fashion of expression.

8. His flashes of ethical reflection, which, though like *all* ethical reflections *often* one-sided.

9. He certainly was an *unfriend* to Whiggery.

10. *That it contains* a great deal of quaint and piquant writing *is only to say* that its writer wrote it.

11. 'Wild Wales,' too, because of *its* easy and direct *opportunity* of comparing its description with the originals.

12. The capital *and* full-length portraits.

13. Whose attraction is *one* neither mainly nor in any very great degree one of pure form.

14. *Constantly* right *in general*.

These are merely a few examples of the style of Mr. Saintsbury, a writer who seems quite ignorant of the commonest laws both of grammar and of literary expression, who has apparently no idea of the difference between the pronouns 'this' and 'that,' and has as little hesitation in ending the clause of a sentence with a preposition, as he has in inserting a parenthesis between a preposition and its object, a mistake of which the most ordinary school-boy would be ashamed. And why can not our magazine-writers use plain, simple English? *Un-*

REVIEWS

friend, quoted above, is a quite unnecessary archaism, and so is such a phrase as *With this Borrow could not away*, in the sense of 'this Borrow could not endure.' 'Borrow's abstraction from general society' may, I suppose, pass muster. Pope talks somewhere of a hermit's 'abstraction,' but what is the meaning of saying that the author of *Lavengro* *quartered* Castile and Leon 'in the most interesting manner, riding everywhere with his servant'? And what defence can be made for such an expression as 'Scott, and other *black beasts* of Borrow's'? Black beast for *bête noire* is really abominable.

The object of my letter, however, is not to point out the deficiencies of Mr. Saintsbury's style, but to express my surprise that his article should have been admitted into the pages of a magazine like *Macmillan's*. Surely it does not require much experience to know that such an article is a disgrace even to magazine literature.

George Borrow. By George Saintsbury. (*Macmillan's Magazine*, January 1886.)

ONE OF MR. CONWAY'S REMAINDERS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 1, 1886.)

MOST people know that in the concoction of a modern novel crime is a more important ingredient than culture.

Mr. Hugh Conway certainly knew it, and though for cleverness of invention and ingenuity of construction he cannot be compared to M. Gaboriau, that master of murder and its mysteries, still he fully recognised the artistic value of villainy. His last novel, *A Cardinal Sin*, opens very well. Mr.

MR. CONWAY'S REMAINDERS

Philip Bouchier, M.P. for Westshire and owner of Redhills, is travelling home from London in a first-class railway carriage when, suddenly, through the window enters a rough-looking middle-aged man brandishing a long-lost marriage certificate, the effect of which is to deprive the right honourable member of his property and estate. However, Mr. Bouchier, M.P., is quite equal to the emergency. On the arrival of the train at its destination, he invites the unwelcome intruder to drive home with him and, reaching a lonely road, shoots him through the head and gives information to the nearest magistrate that he has rid society of a dangerous highwayman.

Mr. Bouchier is brought to trial and triumphantly acquitted. So far, everything goes well with him. Unfortunately, however, the murdered man, with that superhuman strength which on the stage and in novels always accompanies the agony of death, had managed in falling from the dog-cart to throw the marriage certificate up a fir tree! There it is found by a worthy farmer who talks that conventional rustic dialect which, though unknown in the provinces, is such a popular element in every Adelphi melodrama; and it ultimately falls into the hands of an unscrupulous young man who succeeds in blackmailing Mr. Bouchier and in marrying his daughter. Mr. Bouchier suffers tortures from excess of chloral and of remorse; and there is psychology of a weird and wonderful kind, that kind which Mr. Conway may justly be said to have invented and the result of which is not to be underrated. For, if to raise a goose skin on the reader be the aim of art, Mr. Conway must be regarded as a real artist. So harrowing is his

REVIEWS

psychology that the ordinary methods of punctuation are quite inadequate to convey it. Agony and asterisks follow each other on every page and, as the murderer's conscience sinks deeper into chaos, the chaos of commas increases.

Finally, Mr. Bouchier dies, *splendide mendax* to the end. A confession, he rightly argued, would break up the harmony of the family circle, particularly as his eldest son had married the daughter of his luckless victim. Few criminals are so thoughtful for others as Mr. Bouchier is, and we are not without admiration for the unselfishness of one who can give up the luxury of a death-bed repentance.

A Cardinal Sin, then, on the whole, may be regarded as a crude novel of a common melodramatic type. What is painful about it is its style, which is slipshod and careless. To describe a honeymoon as *a rare occurrence in any one person's life* is rather amusing. There is an American story of a young couple who had to be married by telephone, as the bridegroom lived in Nebraska and the bride in New York, and they had to go on separate honeymoons; though, perhaps, this is not what Mr. Conway meant. But what can be said for a sentence like this?—‘The established favourites in the musical world are never quite sure but the *new comer* may not be *one among the many they have seen fail*’; or this?—‘As it is the fate of such a very small number of men to marry a prima donna, I shall be doing little harm, *or be likely to change plans of life*, by enumerating some of the disadvantages.’ The nineteenth century may be a prosaic age, but we fear that, if we are to judge by the general run of novels, it is not an age of prose.

A Cardinal Sin. By Hugh Conway. (Remington and Co.)

TO READ OR NOT TO READ

TO READ OR NOT TO READ

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 8, 1886.)

BOOKS, I fancy, may be conveniently divided into three classes:—

1. Books to read, such as Cicero's *Letters*, Suetonius, Vasari's *Lives of the Painters*, the *Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*, Sir John Mandeville, Marco Polo, St. Simon's *Memoirs*, Mommsen, and (till we get a better one) Grote's *History of Greece*.

2. Books to re-read, such as Plato and Keats: in the sphere of poetry, the masters not the minstrels; in the sphere of philosophy, the seers not the *savants*.

3. Books not to read at all, such as Thomson's *Seasons*, Rogers's *Italy*, Paley's *Evidences*, all the Fathers except St. Augustine, all John Stuart Mill except the essay on *Liberty*, all Voltaire's plays without any exception, Butler's *Analogy*, Grant's *Aristotle*, Hume's *England*, Lewes's *History of Philosophy*, all argumentative books and all books that try to prove anything.

The third class is by far the most important. To tell people what to read is, as a rule, either useless or harmful; for, the appreciation of literature is a question of temperament not of teaching; to Parnassus there is no primer and nothing that one can learn is ever worth learning. But to tell people what not to read is a very different matter, and I venture to recommend it as a mission to the University Extension Scheme.

Indeed, it is one that is eminently needed in this age of ours, an age that reads so much, that it has no time to admire, and writes so much, that it has no time to think. Whoever will select out of the chaos of our modern curricula 'The Worst Hundred

REVIEWS

Books,' and publish a list of them, will confer on the rising generation a real and lasting benefit.

After expressing these views I suppose I should not offer any suggestions at all with regard to 'The Best Hundred Books,' but I hope you will allow me the pleasure of being inconsistent, as I am anxious to put in a claim for a book that has been strangely omitted by most of the excellent judges who have contributed to your columns. I mean the *Greek Anthology*. The beautiful poems contained in this collection seem to me to hold the same position with regard to Greek dramatic literature as do the delicate little figurines of Tanagra to the Phidian marbles, and to be quite as necessary for the complete understanding of the Greek spirit.

I am also amazed to find that Edgar Allan Poe has been passed over. Surely this marvellous lord of rhythmic expression deserves a place? If, in order to make room for him, it be necessary to elbow out some one else, I should elbow out Southey, and I think that Baudelaire might be most advantageously substituted for Keble.

No doubt, both in the *Curse of Kehama* and in the *Christian Year* there are poetic qualities of a certain kind, but absolute catholicity of taste is not without its dangers. It is only an auctioneer who should admire all schools of art.

TWELFTH NIGHT AT OXFORD

(*Dramatic Review*, February 20, 1886.)

ON Saturday last the new theatre at Oxford was opened by the University Dramatic Society. The play selected was Shakespeare's delightful comedy of *Twelfth Night*, a play

TWELFTH NIGHT AT OXFORD

eminently suitable for performance by a club, as it contains so many good acting parts. Shakespeare's tragedies may be made for a single star, but his comedies are made for a galaxy of constellations. In the first he deals with the pathos of the individual, in the second he gives us a picture of life. The Oxford undergraduates, then, are to be congratulated on the selection of the play, and the result fully justified their choice. Mr. Bouchier as Festa the clown was easy, graceful and joyous, as fanciful as his dress and as funny as his bauble. The beautiful songs which Shakespeare has assigned to this character were rendered by him as charmingly as they were dramatically. To act singing is quite as great an art as to sing. Mr. Letchmere Stuart was a delightful Sir Andrew, and gave much pleasure to the audience. One may hate the villains of Shakespeare, but one cannot help loving his fools. Mr. Macpherson was, perhaps, hardly equal to such an immortal part as that of Sir Toby Belch, though there was much that was clever in his performance. Mr. Lindsay threw new and unexpected light on the character of Fabian, and Mr. Clark's Malvolio was a most remarkable piece of acting. What a difficult part Malvolio is! Shakespeare undoubtedly meant us to laugh all through at the pompous steward, and to join in the practical joke upon him, and yet how impossible not to feel a good deal of sympathy with him! Perhaps in this century we are too altruistic to be really artistic. Hazlitt says somewhere that poetical justice is done him in the uneasiness which Olivia suffers on account of her mistaken attachment to Orsino, as her insensibility to the violence of the Duke's passion is atoned for by the discovery of Viola's concealed love for him;

REVIEWS

but it is difficult not to feel Malvolio's treatment is unnecessarily harsh. Mr. Clark, however, gave a very clever rendering, full of subtle touches. If I ventured on a bit of advice, which I feel most reluctant to do, it would be to the effect that while one should always study the method of a great artist, one should never imitate his manner. The manner of an artist is essentially individual, the method of an artist is absolutely universal. The first is personality, which no one should copy; the second is perfection, which all should aim at. Miss Arnold was a most sprightly Maria, and Miss Farmer a dignified Olivia; but as Viola Mrs. Bewicke was hardly successful. Her manner was too boisterous and her method too modern. Where there is violence there is no Viola, where there is no illusion there is no Illyria, and where there is no style there is no Shakespeare. Mr. Higgins looked the part of Sebastian to perfection, and some of the minor characters were excellently played by Mr. Adderley, Mr. King-Harman, Mr. Coningsby Disraeli and Lord Albert Osborne. On the whole, the performance reflected much credit on the Dramatic Society; indeed, its excellence was such that I am led to hope that the University will some day have a theatre of its own, and that proficiency in scene-painting will be regarded as a necessary qualification for the Slade Professorship. On the stage, literature returns to life and archæology becomes art. A fine theatre is a temple where all the muses may meet, a second Parnassus, and the dramatic spirit, though she has long tarried at Cambridge, seems now to be migrating to Oxford.

Thebes did her green unknowing youth engage;
She chooses Athens in her riper age.

LETTERS OF A GREAT WOMAN

THE LETTERS OF A GREAT WOMAN

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 6, 1886.)

OF the many collections of letters that have appeared in this century few, if any, can rival for fascination of style and variety of incident the letters of George Sand which have recently been translated into English by M. Ledos de Beaufort. They extend over a space of more than sixty years, from 1812 to 1876, in fact, and comprise the first letters of Aurore Dupin, a child of eight years old, as well as the last letters of George Sand, a woman of seventy-two. The very early letters, those of the child and of the young married woman, possess, of course, merely a psychological interest; but from 1831, the date of Madame Dudevant's separation from her husband and her first entry into Paris life, the interest becomes universal, and the literary and political history of France is mirrored in every page.

For George Sand was an indefatigable correspondent; she longs in one of her letters, it is true, for 'a planet where reading and writing are absolutely unknown,' but still she had a real pleasure in letter-writing. Her greatest delight was the communication of ideas, and she is always in the heart of the battle. She discusses pauperism with Louis Napoleon in his prison at Ham, and liberty with Armand Barbes in his dungeon at Vincennes; she writes to Lamennais on philosophy, to Mazzini on socialism, to Lamartine on democracy, and to Ledru-Rollin on justice. Her letters reveal to us not merely the life of a great novelist but the soul of a great woman, of a woman who was one with all the noblest movements of her day and whose

REVIEWS

sympathy with humanity was boundless absolutely. For the aristocracy of intellect she had always the deepest veneration, but the democracy of suffering touched her more. She preached the regeneration of mankind, not with the noisy ardour of the paid advocate, but with the enthusiasm of the true evangelist. Of all the artists of this century she was the most altruistic; she felt every one's misfortunes except her own. Her faith never left her; to the end of her life, as she tells us, she was able to believe without illusions. But the people disappointed her a little. She saw that they followed persons not principles, and for 'the great man theory' George Sand had no respect. 'Proper names are the enemies of principles' is one of her aphorisms.

So from 1850 her letters are more distinctly literary. She discusses modern realism with Flaubert, and play-writing with Dumas *filis*; and protests with passionate vehemence against the doctrine of *L'art pour l'art*. 'Art for the sake of itself is an idle sentence,' she writes; 'art for the sake of truth, for the sake of what is beautiful and good, that is the creed I seek.' And in a delightful letter to M. Charles Poncey she repeats the same idea very charmingly. 'People say that birds sing for the sake of singing, but I doubt it. They sing their loves and happiness, and in that they are in keeping with nature. But man must do something more, and poets only sing in order to move people and to make them think.' She wanted M. Poncey to be the poet of the people and, if good advice were all that had been needed, he would certainly have been the Burns of the workshop. She drew out a delightful scheme for a volume to be called *Songs of all Trades* and saw the possibilities of making handi-

LETTERS OF A GREAT WOMAN

crafts poetic. Perhaps she valued good intentions in art a little too much, and she hardly understood that art for art's sake is not meant to express the final cause of art but is merely a formula of creation; but, as she herself had scaled Parnassus, we must not quarrel at her bringing Proletarianism with her. For George Sand must be ranked among our poetic geniuses. She regarded the novel as still within the domain of poetry. Her heroes are not dead photographs; they are great possibilities. Modern novels are dissections; hers are dreams. 'I make popular types,' she writes, 'such as I do no longer see, but such as they should and might be.' For realism, in M. Zola's acceptation of the word, she had no admiration. Art to her was a mirror that transfigured truths but did not represent realities. Hence she could not understand art without personality. 'I am aware,' she writes to Flaubert, 'that you are opposed to the exposition of personal doctrine in literature. Are you right? Does not your opposition proceed rather from a want of conviction than from a principle of æsthetics? If we have any philosophy in our brain it must needs break forth in our writings. But you, as soon as you handle literature, you seem anxious, I know not why, to be another man, the one who must disappear, who annihilates himself and is no more. What a singular mania! What a deficient taste! The worth of our productions depends entirely on our own. Besides, if we withhold our own opinions respecting the personages we create, we naturally leave the reader in uncertainty as to the opinion he should himself form of them. That amounts to wishing not to be understood, and the result of this is that the reader gets weary of us and leaves us.'

REVIEWS

She herself, however, may be said to have suffered from too dominant a personality, and this was the reason of the failure of most of her plays.

Of the drama in the sense of disinterested presentation she had no idea, and what is the strength and life-blood of her novels is the weakness of her dramatic works. But in the main she was right. Art without personality is impossible. And yet the aim of art is not to reveal personality, but to please. This she hardly recognised in her æsthetics, though she realised it in her work. On literary style she has some excellent remarks. She dislikes the extravagances of the romantic school and sees the beauty of simplicity. 'Simplicity,' she writes, 'is the most difficult thing to secure in this world: it is the last limit of experience and the last effort of genius.' She hated the slang and *argot* of Paris life, and loved the words used by the peasants in the provinces. 'The provinces,' she remarks, 'preserve the tradition of the original tongue and create but few new words. I feel much respect for the language of the peasantry; in my estimation it is the more correct.'

She thought Flaubert too much preoccupied with the sense of form, and makes these excellent observations to him—perhaps her best piece of literary criticism. 'You consider the form as the aim, whereas it is but the effect. Happy expressions are only the outcome of emotion and emotion itself proceeds from a conviction. We are only moved by that which we ardently believe in.' Literary schools she distrusted. Individualism was to her the keystone of art as well as of life. 'Do not belong to any school: do not imitate any model,' is her advice. Yet she never encouraged eccentricity. 'Be correct,'

NEWS FROM PARNASSUS

she writes to Eugène Pelletan, 'that is rarer than being eccentric, as the time goes. It is much more common to please by bad taste than to receive the cross of honour.'

On the whole, her literary advice is sound and healthy. She never shrieks and she never sneers. She is the incarnation of good sense. And the whole collection of her letters is a perfect treasure-house of suggestions both on art and on politics. The manner of the translation is often rather clumsy, but the matter is always so intensely interesting that we can afford to be charitable.

Letters of George Sand. Translated and edited by Raphael Ledos de Beaufort. (Ward and Downey.)

NEWS FROM PARNASSUS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 12, 1886.)

THAT most delightful of all French critics, M. Edmond Scherer, has recently stated in an article on Wordsworth that the English read far more poetry than any other European nation. We sincerely hope this may be true, not merely for the sake of the public but for the sake of the poets also. It would be sad indeed if the many volumes of poems that are every year published in London found no readers but the authors themselves and the authors' relations; and the real philanthropist should recognise it as part of his duties to buy every new book of verse that appears. Sometimes, we acknowledge, he will be disappointed, often he will be bored; still now and then he will be amply rewarded for his reckless benevolence.

REVIEWS

Mr. George Francis Armstrong's *Stories of Wicklow*, for instance, is most pleasant reading. Mr. Armstrong is already well known as the author of *Ugone*, *King Saul* and other dramas, and his latest volume shows that the power and passion of his early work has not deserted him. Most modern Irish poetry is purely political and deals with the wickedness of the landlords and the Tories; but Mr. Armstrong sings of the picturesqueness of Erin, not of its politics. He tells us very charmingly of the magic of its mists and the melody of its colour, and draws a most captivating picture of the peasants of the county Wicklow, whom he describes as

A kindly folk in vale and moor,
Unvexed with rancours, frank and free
In mood and manners—rich with poor
Attuned in happiest amity :
Where still the cottage door is wide,
The stranger welcomed at the hearth,
And pleased the humbler hearts confide
Still in the friend of gentler birth.

The most ambitious poem in the volume is *De Verdun of Darragh*. It is at once lyrical and dramatic, and though its manner reminds us of Browning and its method of *Maud*, still all through it there is a personal and individual note. Mr. Armstrong also carefully observes the rules of decorum, and, as he promises his readers in a preface, keeps quite clear of 'the seas of sensual art.' In fact, an elderly maiden lady could read this volume without a blush, a thrill, or even an emotion.

Dr. Goodchild does not possess Mr. Armstrong's literary touch, but his *Somnia Medici* is distinguished by a remarkable quality of forcible and direct expression. The poem that opens his volume, *Myrrha*, or *A Dialogue on Creeds*, is quite as readable as a metrical

NEWS FROM PARNASSUS

dialogue on creeds could possibly be ; and *The Organ Builder* is a most romantic story charmingly told. Dr. Goodchild seems to be an ardent disciple of Mr. Browning, and though he may not be able to reproduce the virtues of his master, at least he can echo his defects very cleverly. Such a verse as—

'Tis the subtle essayal
Of the Jews and Judas,
Such lying lisp
Might hail a will-o'-the-wisp,
A thin somebody—Theudas—

is an excellent example of low comedy in poetry. One of the best poems in the book is *The Ballad of Three Kingdoms*. Indeed, if the form were equal to the conception, it would be a delightful work of art ; but Dr. Goodchild, though he may be a master of metres, is not a master of music yet. His verse is often harsh and rugged. On the whole, however, his volume is clever and interesting.

Mr. Keene has not, we believe, a great reputation in England as yet, but in India he seems to be well known. From a collection of criticisms appended to his volume it appears that the *Overland Mail* has christened him the Laureate of Hindostan and that the *Allahabad Pioneer* once compared him to Keats. He is a pleasant rhymers, as rhymers go, and, though we strongly object to his putting the Song of Solomon into bad blank verse, still we are quite ready to admire his translations of the *Pervigilium Veneris* and of Omar Khayyam. We wish he would not write sonnets with fifteen lines. A fifteen-line sonnet is as bad a monstrosity as a sonnet in dialogue. The volume has the merit of being very small, and contains many stanzas quite suitable for valentines.

Finally we come to *Procris and Other Poems*, by

REVIEWS

Mr. W. G. Hole. Mr. Hole is apparently a very young writer. His work, at least, is full of crudities, his syntax is defective, and his grammar is questionable. And yet, when all is said, in the one poem of *Procris* it is easy to recognise the true poetic ring. Elsewhere the volume is amateurish and weak. *The Spanish Main* was suggested by a leader in the *Daily Telegraph*, and bears all the traces of its lurid origin. *Sir Jocellyn's Trust* is a sort of pseudo-Tennysonian idyll in which the damozel says to her gallant rescuer, 'Come, come, Sir Knight, I catch my death of cold,' and recompenses him with

What noble minds
Regard the first reward,—an orphan's thanks.

Nunc Dimittis is dull and *The Wandering Jew* dreadful; but *Procris* is a beautiful poem. The richness and variety of its metaphors, the music of its lines, the fine opulence of its imagery, all seem to point to a new poet. Faults, it is true, there are in abundance; but they are faults that come from want of trouble, not from want of taste. Mr. Hole shows often a rare and exquisite sense of beauty and a marvellous power of poetic vision, and if he will cultivate the technique of his craft a little more we have no doubt but that he will some day give us work worthy to endure. It is true that there is more promise than perfection in his verse at present, yet it is a promise that seems likely to be fulfilled.

(1) *Stories of Wicklom.* By George Francis Armstrong, M.A. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

(2) *Somnia Medici.* By John A. Goodchild. Second Series. (Kegan Paul.)

(3) *Verses: Translated and Original.* By H. E. Keene. (W. H. Allen and Co.)

(4) *Procris and Other Poems.* By W. G. Hole. (Kegan Paul.)

SOME NOVELS

SOME NOVELS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 14, 1886.)

AFTER a careful perusal of *'Twixt Love and Duty*, by Mr. Tighe Hopkins, we confess ourselves unable to inform anxious inquirers who it is that is thus sandwiched, and how he (or she) got into so unpleasant a predicament. The curious reader with a taste for enigmas may be advised to find out for himself—if he can. Even if he be unsuccessful, his trouble will be repaid by the pleasant writing and clever character drawing of Mr. Hopkins's tale. The plot is less praiseworthy. The whole Madeira episode seems to lead up to this dilemma, and after all it comes to nothing. We brace up our nerves for a tragedy and are treated instead to the mildest of marivaudage—which is disappointing. In conclusion, one word of advice to Mr. Hopkins: let him refrain from apostrophising his characters after this fashion: 'Oh, Gilbert Reade, what are you about that you dally with this golden chance?' and so forth. This is one of the worst mannerisms of a bygone generation of story tellers.

Mr. Gallenga has written, as he says, 'a tale without a murder,' but having put a pistol-ball through his hero's chest and left him alive and hearty notwithstanding, he cannot be said to have produced a tale without a miracle. His heroine, too, if we may judge by his descriptions of her, is 'all a wonder and a wild desire.' At the age of seventeen she 'was one of the Great Maker's masterpieces . . . a living likeness of the Dresden Madonna.' One rather shudders to think of what she may become at forty, but this is an impertinent prying into futurity.

REVIEWS

She hails from 'Maryland, my Maryland!' and has 'received a careful, if not a superior, education.' Need we add that she marries the heir to an earldom who, as aforesaid, has had himself perforated by a pistol-bullet on her behalf? Mr. Gallenga's division of this book into acts and scenes is not justified by anything specially dramatic either in its structure or its method. The dialogue, in truth, is somewhat stilted. Nevertheless, its first-hand sketches of Roman society are not without interest, and one or two characters seem to be drawn from nature.

The *Life's Mistake* which forms the theme of Mrs. Lovett Cameron's two volumes is not a mistake after all, but results in unmixed felicity; and as it is brought about by fraud on the part of the hero, this conclusion is not as moral as it might be. For the rest, the tale is a very familiar one. Its personages are the embarrassed squire with his charming daughter, the wealthy and amorous mortgagee, and the sailor lover who is either supposed to be drowned or falsely represented to be fickle—in Mrs. Cameron's tale he is both in succession. When we add that there is a stanza from Byron on the title-page and a poetical quotation at the beginning of each chapter, we have possessed the discerning reader of all necessary information both as to the matter and the manner of Mrs. Cameron's performance.

Mr. E. O. Pleydell-Bouverie has endowed the novel-writing fraternity with a new formula for the composition of titles. After *J. S.; or, Trivialities* there is no reason why we should not have *A. B.; or, Platitudes*, *M. N.; or, Sentimentalisms*, *Y. Z.; or, Inanities*. There are many books which these simple titles would characterise much more aptly than any high-flown phrases—as aptly, in fact, as Mr. Bou-

SOME NOVELS

verie's title characterises the volume before us. It sets forth the uninteresting fortunes of an insignificant person, one John Stiles, a briefless barrister. The said John falls in love with a young lady, inherits a competence, omits to tell his love, and is killed by the bursting of a fowling-piece—that is all. The only point of interest presented by the book is the problem as to how it ever came to be written. We can scarcely find the solution in Mr. Bouverie's elaborately smart style which cannot be said to transmute his 'trivialities' into 'flies in amber.'

Mr. Swinburne once proposed that it should be a penal offence against literature for any writer to affix a proverb, a phrase or a quotation to a novel, by way of tag or title. We wonder what he would say to the title of 'Pen Oliver's' last book! Probably he would empty on it the bitter vial of his scorn and satire. *All But* is certainly an intolerable name to give to any literary production. The story, however, is quite an interesting one. At Laxenford Hall live Lord and Lady Arthur Winstanley. Lady Arthur has two children by her first marriage, the elder of whom, Walter Hope-Kennedy by name, is heir to the broad acres. Walter is a pleasant English boy, fonder of cricket than of culture, healthy, happy and susceptible. He falls in love with Fanny Taylor, a pretty village girl; is thrown out of his dog-cart one night through the machinations of a jealous rival, breaks one of his ribs and gets a violent fever. His stepfather tries to murder him by subcutaneous injections of morphia but is detected by the local doctor, and Walter recovers. However, he does not marry Fanny after all, and the story ends ineffectually. To say of a dress that 'it was rather

REVIEWS

under than over adorned' is not very pleasing English, and such a phrase as 'almost always, but by no means invariably,' is quite detestable. Still we must not expect the master of the scalpel to be the master of the stilus as well. *All But* is a very charming tale, and the sketches of village life are quite admirable. We recommend it to all who are tired of the productions of Mr. Hugh Conway's dreadful disciples.

(1) *'Twixt Love and Duty: A Novel.* By Tighe Hopkins. (Chatto and Windus.)

(2) *Jenny Jennet: A Tale Without a Murder.* By A. Gallenga. (Chapman and Hall.)

(3) *A Life's Mistake: A Novel.* By Mrs. H. Lovett Cameron. (Ward and Downey.)

(4) *J. S.; or, Trivialities: A Novel.* By Edward Oliver Pleydell-Bouverie. (Griffith, Farren and Co.)

(5) *All But: A Chronicle of Laxenford Life.* By Pen Oliver, F.R.C.S. (Kegan Paul.)

A LITERARY PILGRIM

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 17, 1886.)

ANTIQUARIAN books, as a rule, are extremely dull reading. They give us facts without form, science without style, and learning without life. An exception, however, must be made for M. Gaston Boissier's *Promenades Archéologiques*. M. Boissier is a most pleasant and picturesque writer, and is really able to give his readers useful information without ever boring them, an accomplishment which is entirely unknown in Germany, and in England is extremely rare.

The first essay in his book is on the probable site of Horace's country-house, a subject that has interested many scholars from the Renaissance down to our own day. M. Boissier, following the investigations of Signor Rosa, places it on a little hill over-

A LITERARY PILGRIM

looking the Licenza, and his theory has a great deal to recommend it. The plough still turns up on the spot the bricks and tiles of an old Roman villa; a spring of clear water, like that of which the poet so often sang, 'breaks babbling from the hollow rock,' and is still called by the peasants *Fonte dell' Oratini*, some faint echo possibly of the singer's name; the view from the hill is just what is described in the epistles, 'Continui montes nisi dissociantur opaca valle'; hard by is the site of the ruined temple of Vacuna, where Horace tells us he wrote one of his poems, and the local rustics still go to Varia (Vico-varo) on market days as they used to do when the graceful Roman lyrist sauntered through his vines and played at being a country gentleman.

M. Boissier, however, is not content merely with identifying the poet's house; he also warmly defends him from the charge that has been brought against him of servility in accepting it. He points out that it was only after the invention of printing that literature became a money-making profession, and that, as there was no copyright law at Rome to prevent books being pirated, patrons had to take the place that publishers hold, or should hold, nowadays. The Roman patron, in fact, kept the Roman poet alive, and we fancy that many of our modern bards rather regret the old system. Better, surely, the humiliation of the *sportula* than the indignity of a bill for printing! Better to accept a country-house as a gift than to be in debt to one's landlady! On the whole, the patron was an excellent institution, if not for poetry at least for the poets; and though he had to be propitiated by panegyrics, still are we not told by our most shining lights that the subject is of no importance in a work of art? M. Boissier

REVIEWS

need not apologise for Horace : every poet longs for a Mæcenas.

An essay on the Etruscan tombs at Corneto follows, and the remainder of the volume is taken up by a most fascinating article called *Le Pays de l'Enéide*. M. Boissier claims for Virgil's descriptions of scenery an absolute fidelity of detail. 'Les poètes anciens,' he says, 'ont le goût de la précision et de la fidélité: ils n'imaginent guère de paysages en l'air,' and with this view he visited every place in Italy and Sicily that Virgil has mentioned. Sometimes, it is true, modern civilisation, or modern barbarism, has completely altered the aspect of the scene; the 'desolate shore of Drepanum,' for instance ('Drepani illætabilis ora') is now covered with thriving manufactories and stucco villas, and the 'bird-haunted forest' through which the Tiber flowed into the sea has long ago disappeared. Still, on the whole, the general character of the Italian landscape is unchanged, and M. Boissier's researches show very clearly how personal and how vivid were Virgil's impressions of nature. The subject is, of course, a most interesting one, and those who love to make pilgrimages without stirring from home cannot do better than spend three shillings on the French Academician's *Promenades Archéologiques*.

Nouvelles Promenades Archéologiques. Horace et Virgile. By Gaston Boissier. (Hachette.)

BÉRANGER IN ENGLAND

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 21, 1886.)

A PHILOSOPHIC politician once remarked that the best possible form of government is an absolute monarchy tempered by street ballads. Without at all agreeing with this aphorism

BÉRANGER IN ENGLAND

we still cannot but regret that the new democracy does not use poetry as a means for the expression of political opinion. The Socialists, it is true, have been heard singing the later poems of Mr. William Morris, but the street ballad is really dead in England. The fact is that most modern poetry is so artificial in its form, so individual in its essence and so literary in its style, that the people as a body are little moved by it, and when they have grievances against the capitalist or the aristocrat they prefer strikes to sonnets and rioting to rondels.

Possibly, Mr. William Toynbee's pleasant little volume of translations from Béranger may be the herald of a new school. Béranger had all the qualifications for a popular poet. He wrote to be sung more than to be read; he preferred the Pont Neuf to Parnassus; he was patriotic as well as romantic, and humorous as well as humane. Translations of poetry as a rule are merely misrepresentations, but the muse of Béranger is so simple and naïve that she can wear our English dress with ease and grace, and Mr. Toynbee has kept much of the mirth and music of the original. Here and there, undoubtedly, the translation could be improved upon; 'rapiers' for instance is an abominable rhyme to 'forefathers'; 'the hated arms of Albion' in the same poem is a very feeble rendering of 'le léopard de l'Anglais,' and such a verse as

'Mid France's miracles of art,
Rare trophies won from art's own land,
I've lived to see with burning heart
The fog-bred poor triumphant stand,

reproduces very inadequately the charm of the original:

REVIEWS

Dans nos palais, où, près de la victoire,
Brillaient les arts, doux fruits des beaux climats,
J'ai vu du Nord les peuplades sans gloire,
De leurs manteaux secouer les frimas.

On the whole, however, Mr. Toynbee's work is good; *Les Champs*, for example, is very well translated, and so are the two delightful poems *Rosette* and *Ma République*; and there is a good deal of spirit in *Le Marquis de Carabas*:

Whom have we here in conqueror's rôle?
Our grand old Marquis, bless his soul!
Whose grand old charger (mark his bone!)
Has borne him back to claim his own.
Note, if you please, the grand old style
In which he nears his grand old pile;
With what an air of grand old state
He waves that blade immaculate!
Hats off, hats off, for my lord to pass,
The grand old Marquis of Carabas!—

though 'that blade immaculate' has hardly got the sting of 'un sabre innocent'; and in the fourth verse of the same poem, 'Marquise, you'll have the bed-chamber' does not very clearly convey the sense of the line 'La Marquise a le tabouret.' The best translation in the book is *The Court Suit* (L'Habit de Cour), and if Mr. Toynbee will give us some more work as clever as this we shall be glad to see a second volume from his pen. Béranger is not nearly well enough known in England, and though it is always better to read a poet in the original, still translations have their value as echoes have their music.

A Selection from the Songs of De Béranger in English Verse. By William Toynbee. (Kegan Paul.)

THE POETRY OF THE PEOPLE

THE POETRY OF THE PEOPLE

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, May 13, 1886.)

THE Countess Martinengo deserves well of all poets, peasants and publishers. Folk-lore is so often treated nowadays merely from the point of view of the comparative mythologist, that it is really delightful to come across a book that deals with the subject simply as literature. For the Folk-tale is the father of all fiction as the Folk-song is the mother of all poetry; and in the games, the tales and the ballads of primitive people it is easy to see the germs of such perfected forms of art as the drama, the novel and the epic. It is, of course, true that the highest expression of life is to be found not in the popular songs, however poetical, of any nation, but in the great masterpieces of self-conscious Art; yet it is pleasant sometimes to leave the summit of Parnassus to look at the wild-flowers in the valley, and to turn from the lyre of Apollo to listen to the reed of Pan. We can still listen to it. To this day, the vineyard dressers of Calabria will mock the passer-by with satirical verses as they used to do in the old pagan days, and the peasants of the olive woods of Provence answer each other in amœbæan strains. The Sicilian shepherd has not yet thrown his pipe aside, and the children of modern Greece sing the swallow-song through the villages in spring-time, though Theognis is more than two thousand years dead. Nor is this popular poetry merely the rhythmic expression of joy and sorrow; it is in the highest degree imaginative; and taking its inspiration directly from nature it abounds in realistic metaphor and in picturesque and fantastic

REVIEWS

imagery. It must, of course, be admitted that there is a conventionality of nature as there is a conventionality of art, and that certain forms of utterance are apt to become stereotyped by too constant use; yet, on the whole, it is impossible not to recognise in the Folk-songs that the Countess Martinengo has brought together one strong dominant note of fervent and flawless sincerity. Indeed, it is only in the more terrible dramas of the Elizabethan age that we can find any parallel to the Corsican *voceri* with their shrill intensity of passion, their awful frenzies of grief and hate. And yet, ardent as the feeling is, the form is nearly always beautiful. Now and then, in the poems of the extreme South one meets with a curious crudity of realism, but, as a rule, the sense of beauty prevails.

Some of the Folk-poems in this book have all the lightness and loveliness of lyrics, all of them have that sweet simplicity of pure song by which mirth finds its own melody and mourning its own music, and even where there are conceits of thought and expression they are conceits born of fancy not of affectation. Herrick himself might have envied that wonderful love-song of Provence :

If thou wilt be the falling dew
And fall on me alway,
Then I will be the white, white rose
On yonder thorny spray.
If thou wilt be the white, white rose
On yonder thorny spray,
Then I will be the honey-bee
And kiss thee all the day.

If thou wilt be the honey-bee
And kiss me all the day,
Then I will be in yonder heaven
The star of brightest ray.

THE POETRY OF THE PEOPLE

If thou wilt be in yonder heaven
The star of brightest ray,
Then I will be the dawn, and we
Shall meet at break of day.

How charming also is this lullaby by which the
Corsican mother sings her babe to sleep!

Gold and pearls my vessel lade,
Silk and cloth the cargo be,
All the sails are of brocade
Coming from beyond the sea;
And the helm of finest gold,
Made a wonder to behold.
Fast awhile in slumber lie;
Sleep, my child, and hushaby.

After you were born full soon,
You were christened all aright;
Godmother she was the moon,
Godfather the sun so bright.
All the stars in heaven told
Wore their necklaces of gold.
Fast awhile in slumber lie;
Sleep, my child, and hushaby.

Or this from Roumania :

Sleep, my daughter, sleep an hour;
Mother's darling gilliflower.
Mother rocks thee, standing near,
She will wash thee in the clear
Waters that from fountains run,
To protect thee from the sun.

Sleep, my darling, sleep an hour,
Grow thou as the gilliflower.
As a tear-drop be thou white,
As a willow tall and slight;
Gentle as the ring-doves are,
And be lovely as a star!

We hardly know what poems are sung to English
babies, but we hope they are as beautiful as these
two. Blake might have written them.

REVIEWS

The Countess Martinengo has certainly given us a most fascinating book. In a volume of moderate dimensions, not too long to be tiresome nor too brief to be disappointing, she has collected together the best examples of modern Folk-songs, and with her as a guide the lazy reader lounging in his armchair may wander from the melancholy pine-forests of the North to Sicily's orange-groves and the pomegranate gardens of Armenia, and listen to the singing of those to whom poetry is a passion, not a profession, and whose art, coming from inspiration and not from schools, if it has the limitations, at least has also the loveliness of its origin, and is one with blowing grasses and the flowers of the field.

Essays in the Study of Folk-Songs. By the Countess Evelyn Martinengo Césaresco. (Redway.)

THE CENCI

(*Dramatic Review*, May 15, 1886.)

THE production of *The Cenci* last week at the Grand Theatre, Islington, may be said to have been an era in the literary history of this century, and the Shelley Society deserves the highest praise and warmest thanks of all for having given us an opportunity of seeing Shelley's play under the conditions he himself desired for it. For *The Cenci* was written absolutely with a view to theatric presentation, and had Shelley's own wishes been carried out it would have been produced during his lifetime at Covent Garden, with Edmund Kean and Miss O'Neill in the principal parts. In working out his conception, Shelley had studied very carefully the æsthetics of dramatic art. He saw that the essence of the drama

THE CENCI

is disinterested presentation, and that the characters must not be merely mouthpieces for splendid poetry but must be living subjects for terror and for pity. 'I have endeavoured,' he says, 'as nearly as possible to represent the characters as they probably were, and have sought to avoid the error of making them actuated by my own conception of right or wrong, false or true: thus under a thin veil converting names and actions of the sixteenth century into cold impersonations of my own mind. . . .

'I have avoided with great care the introduction of what is commonly called mere poetry, and I imagine there will scarcely be found a detached simile or a single isolated description, unless Beatrice's description of the chasm appointed for her father's murder should be judged to be of that nature.'

He recognised that a dramatist must be allowed far greater freedom of expression than what is conceded to a poet. 'In a dramatic composition,' to use his own words, 'the imagery and the passion should interpenetrate one another, the former being reserved simply for the full development and illustration of the latter. Imagination is as the immortal God which should assume flesh for the redemption of mortal passion. It is thus that the most remote and the most familiar imagery may alike be fit for dramatic purposes when employed in the illustration of strong feeling, which raises what is low, and levels to the apprehension that which is lofty, casting over all the shadow of its own greatness. In other respects I have written more carelessly, that is, without an over-fastidious and learned choice of words. In this respect I entirely agree with those modern critics who assert that in order to move men to true sympathy we must use the familiar language of men.'

REVIEWS

He knew that if the dramatist is to teach at all it must be by example, not by precept.

‘The highest moral purpose,’ he remarks, ‘aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant and kind. If dogmas can do more it is well: but a drama is no fit place for the enforcement of them.’ He fully realises that it is by a conflict between our artistic sympathies and our moral judgment that the greatest dramatic effects are produced. ‘It is in the restless and anatomising casuistry with which men seek the justification of Beatrice, yet feel that she has done what needs justification; it is in the superstitious horror with which they contemplate alike her wrongs and their revenge, that the dramatic character of what she did and suffered consists.’

In fact no one has more clearly understood than Shelley the mission of the dramatist and the meaning of the drama.

And yet I hardly think that the production of *The Cenci*, its absolute presentation on the stage, can be said to have added anything to its beauty, its pathos, or even its realism. Not that the principal actors were at all unworthy of the work of art they interpreted; Mr. Hermann Vezin’s *Cenci* was a noble and magnificent performance; Miss Alma Murray stands now in the very first rank of our English actresses as a mistress of power and pathos; and Mr. Leonard Outram’s Orsino was most subtle and artistic; but that *The Cenci* needs for the production of its perfect effect no interpretation at all. It is, as we read it, a complete work of

HELENA IN TROAS

art—capable, indeed, of being acted, but not dependent on theatric presentation; and the impression produced by its exhibition on the stage seemed to me to be merely one of pleasure at the gratification of an intellectual curiosity of seeing how far Melpomene could survive the wagon of Thespis.

In producing the play, however, the members of the Shelley Society were merely carrying out the poet's own wishes, and they are to be congratulated on the success of their experiment—a success due not to any gorgeous scenery or splendid pageant, but to the excellence of the actors who aided them.

HELENA IN TROAS

(*Dramatic Review*, May 22, 1886.)

ONE might have thought that to have produced *As You Like It* in an English forest would have satisfied the most ambitious spirit; but Mr. Godwin has not contented himself with his sylvan triumphs. From Shakespeare he has passed to Sophocles, and has given us the most perfect exhibition of a Greek dramatic performance that has as yet been seen in this country. For, beautiful as were the productions of the *Agamemnon* at Oxford and the *Eumenides* at Cambridge, their effects were marred in no small or unimportant degree by the want of a proper orchestra for the chorus with its dance and song, a want that was fully supplied in Mr. Godwin's presentation by the use of the arena of a circus.

In the centre of this circle, which was paved with the semblance of tessellated marble, stood the altar of Dionysios, and beyond it rose the long, shallow stage, faced with casts from the temple of Bassæ,

REVIEWS

and bearing the huge portal of the house of Paris and the gleaming battlements of Troy. Over the portal hung a great curtain, painted with crimson lions, which, when drawn aside, disclosed two massive gates of bronze; in front of the house was placed a golden image of Aphrodite, and across the ramparts on either hand could be seen a stretch of blue waters and faint purple hills. The scene was lovely, not merely in the harmony of its colour but in the exquisite delicacy of its architectural proportions. No nation has ever felt the pure beauty of mere construction so strongly as the Greeks, and in this respect Mr. Godwin has fully caught the Greek feeling.

The play opened by the entrance of the chorus, white vested and gold filleted, under the leadership of Miss Kinnaird, whose fine gestures and rhythmic movements were quite admirable. In answer to their appeal the stage curtains slowly divided, and from the house of Paris came forth Helen herself, in a robe woven with all the wonders of war, and brodered with the pageant of battle. With her were her two handmaidens—one in white and yellow and one in green; Hecuba followed in sombre grey of mourning, and Priam in kingly garb of gold and purple, and Paris in Phrygian cap and light archer's dress; and when at sunset the lover of Helen was borne back wounded from the field, down from the oaks of Ida stole C  none in the flowing drapery of the daughter of a river-god, every fold of her garments rippling like dim water as she moved.

As regards the acting, the two things the Greeks valued most in actors were grace of gesture and music of voice. Indeed, to gain these virtues their

HELENA IN TROAS

actors used to subject themselves to a regular course of gymnastics and a particular régime of diet, health being to the Greeks not merely a quality of art, but a condition of its production. Whether or not our English actors hold the same view may be doubted; but Mr. Vezin certainly has always recognised the importance of a physical as well as of an intellectual training for the stage, and his performance of King Priam was distinguished by stately dignity and most musical enunciation. With Mr. Vezin, grace of gesture is an unconscious result—not a conscious effort. It has become nature, because it was once art. Mr. Beerbohm Tree also is deserving of very high praise for his Paris. Ease and elegance characterised every movement he made, and his voice was extremely effective. Mr. Tree is the perfect Proteus of actors. He can wear the dress of any century and the appearance of any age, and has a marvellous capacity of absorbing his personality into the character he is creating. To have method without mannerism is given only to a few, but among the few is Mr. Tree. Miss Alma Murray does not possess the physique requisite for our conception of Helen, but the beauty of her movements and the extremely sympathetic quality of her voice gave an indefinable charm to her performance. Mrs. Jopling looked like a poem from the Pantheon, and indeed the *personæ mutæ* were not the least effective figures in the play. Hecuba was hardly a success. In acting, the impression of sincerity is conveyed by tone, not by mere volume of voice, and whatever influence emotion has on utterance it is certainly not in the direction of false emphasis. Mrs. Beerbohm Tree's CEnone was much better, and had some fine moments of passion; but the harsh realistic

REVIEWS

shriek with which the nymph flung herself from the battlements, however effective it might have been in a comedy of Sardou, or in one of Mr. Burnand's farces, was quite out of place in the representation of a Greek tragedy. The classical drama is an imaginative, poetic art, which requires the grand style for its interpretation, and produces its effects by the most ideal means. It is in the operas of Wagner, not in popular melodrama, that any approximation to the Greek method can be found. Better to wear mask and buskin than to mar by any modernity of expression the calm majesty of Melpomene.

As an artistic whole, however, the performance was undoubtedly a great success. It has been much praised for its archæology, but Mr. Godwin is something more than a mere antiquarian. He takes the facts of archæology, but he converts them into artistic and dramatic effects, and the historical accuracy that underlies the visible shapes of beauty that he presents to us, is not by any means the distinguishing quality of the complete work of art. This quality is the absolute unity and harmony of the entire presentation, the presence of one mind controlling the most minute details, and revealing itself only in that true perfection which hides personality. On more than one occasion it seemed to me that the stage was kept a little too dark, and that a purely picturesque effect of light and shade was substituted for the plastic clearness of outline that the Greeks so desired; some objection, too, might be made to the late character of the statue of Aphrodite, which was decidedly post-Periclean; these, however, are unimportant points. The performance was not intended to be an absolute reproduction of the Greek stage in the fifth century before Christ:

HELENA IN TROAS

it was simply the presentation in Greek form of a poem conceived in the Greek spirit; and the secret of its beauty was the perfect correspondence of form and matter, the delicate equilibrium of spirit and sense.

As for the play, it had, of course, to throw away many sweet superfluous graces of expression before it could adapt itself to the conditions of theatrical presentation, but much that is good was retained; and the choruses, which really possess some pure notes of lyric loveliness, were sung in their entirety. Here and there, it is true, occur such lines as—

What wilt thou do? What can the handful still left?—

lines that owe their blank verse character more to the courtesy of the printer than to the genius of the poet, for without rhythm and melody there is no verse at all; and the attempt to fit Greek forms of construction to our English language often gives the work the air of an awkward translation; however, there is a great deal that is pleasing in *Helena in Troas* and, on the whole, the play was worthy of its pageant and the poem deserved the peplums.

It is much to be regretted that Mr. Godwin's beautiful theatre cannot be made a permanent institution. Even looked at from the low standpoint of educational value, such a performance as that given last Monday might be of the greatest service to modern culture; and who knows but a series of these productions might civilise South Kensington and give tone to Brompton?

Still it is something to have shown our artists 'a dream of form in days of thought,' and to have allowed the Philistines to peer into Paradise. And this is what Mr. Godwin has done.

REVIEWS

PLEASING AND PRATTLING

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, August 4, 1886.)

SIXTY years ago, when Sir Walter Scott was inaugurating an era of historical romance, *The Wolfe of Badenoch* was a very popular book. To us its interest is more archæological than artistic, and its characters seem merely puppets parading in fourteenth-century costume. It is true our grandfathers thought differently. They liked novels in which the heroine exclaims, 'Peace with thine impudence, sir knave. Dost thou dare to speak thus in presence of the Lady Eleanore de Selby? . . . A greybeard's ire shall never—,' while the hero remarks that 'the welkin reddenes i' the west.' In fact, they considered that language like this is exceedingly picturesque and gives the necessary historical perspective. Nowadays, however, few people have the time to read a novel that requires a glossary to explain it, and we fear that without a glossary the general reader will hardly appreciate the value of such expressions as 'gnoffe,' 'bowke,' 'herborow,' 'papelarde,' 'couepe,' 'rethes,' 'pankers,' 'agroted lorrel,' and 'horrow tallow-catch,' all of which occur in the first few pages of *The Wolfe of Badenoch*. In a novel we want life, not learning; and, unfortunately, Sir Thomas Lauder lays himself open to the criticism Jonson made on Spenser, that 'in affecting the ancients he writ no language.' Still, there is a healthy spirit of adventure in the book, and no doubt many people will be interested to see the kind of novel the public liked in 1825.

Keep My Secret, by Miss G. M. Robins, is very different. It is quite modern both in manner and in matter. The heroine, Miss Olga Damien, when

PLEASING AND PRATTLING

she is a little girl tries to murder Mr. Victor Burnside. Mr. Burnside, who is tall, blue-eyed and amber-haired, makes her promise never to mention the subject to any one; this, in fact, is the secret that gives the title to the book. The result is that Miss Damien is blackmailed by a fascinating and unscrupulous uncle and is nearly burnt to death in the secret chamber of an old castle. The novel at the end gets too melodramatic in character and the plot becomes a chaos of incoherent incidents, but the writing is clever and bright. It is just the book, in fact, for a summer holiday, as it is never dull and yet makes no demands at all upon the intellect.

Mrs. Chetwynd gives us a new type of widow. As a rule, in fiction widows are delightful, designing and deceitful; but Mrs. Dorriman is not by any means a Cleopatra in crape. She is a weak, retiring woman, very feeble and very feminine, and with the simplicity that is characteristic of such sweet and shallow natures she allows her brother to defraud her of all her property. The widow is rather a bore and the brother is quite a bear, but Margaret Rivers who, to save her sister from poverty, marries a man she does not love, is a cleverly conceived character, and Lady Lyons is an admirable old dowager. The book can be read without any trouble and was probably written without any trouble also. The style is prattling and pleasing.

The plot of *Delamere* is not very new. On the death of her husband, Mrs. De Ruthven discovers that the estates belong by right not to her son Raymond but to her niece Fleurette. As she keeps her knowledge to herself, a series of complications follows, but the cousins are ultimately united in marriage and the story ends happily. Mr. Curzon

REVIEWS

writes in a clever style, and though its construction is rather clumsy the novel is a thoroughly interesting one.

A Daughter of Fife tells us of the love of a young artist for a Scotch fisher-girl. The character sketches are exceptionally good, especially that of David Promoter, a fisherman who leaves his nets to preach the gospel, and the heroine is quite charming till she becomes civilised. The book is a most artistic combination of romantic feeling with realistic form, and it is pleasant to read descriptions of Scotch scenery that do not represent the land of mist and mountain as a sort of chromolithograph from the Brompton Road.

In Mr. Speight's novel, *A Barren Title*, we have an impoverished earl who receives an allowance from his relations on condition of his remaining single, being all the time secretly married and the father of a grown-up son. The story is improbable and amusing.

On the whole, there is a great deal to be said for our ordinary English novelists. They have all some story to tell, and most of them tell it in an interesting manner. Where they fail is in concentration of style. Their characters are far too eloquent and talk themselves to tatters. What we want is a little more reality and a little less rhetoric. We are most grateful to them that they have not as yet accepted any frigid formula, nor stereotyped themselves into a school, but we wish that they would talk less and think more. They lead us through a barren desert of verbiage to a mirage that they call life; we wander aimlessly through a very wilderness of words in search of one touch of nature. However, one should not be too severe on English novels:

BALZAC IN ENGLISH

they are the only relaxation of the intellectually unemployed.

(1) *The Wolfe of Badenoch: A Historical Romance of the Fourteenth Century.* By Sir Thomas Lauder. (Hamilton, Adams and Co.)

(2) *Keep My Secret.* By G. M. Robins. (Bentley and Son.)

(3) *Mrs. Dorrیمان.* By the Hon. Mrs. Henry Chetwynd. (Chapman and Hall.)

(4) *Delamere.* By G. Curzon. (Sampson Low, Marston and Co.)

(5) *A Daughter of Fife.* By Amelia Barr. (James Clarke and Co.)

(6) *A Barren Title.* By T. W. Speight. (Chatto and Windus.)

BALZAC IN ENGLISH

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, September 13, 1886.)

MANY years ago, in a number of *All the Year Round*, Charles Dickens complained that Balzac was very little read in England, and although since then the public has become more familiar with the great masterpieces of French fiction, still it may be doubted whether the *Comédie Humaine* is at all appreciated or understood by the general run of novel readers. It is really the greatest monument that literature has produced in our century, and M. Taine hardly exaggerates when he says that, after Shakespeare, Balzac is our most important magazine of documents on human nature. Balzac's aim, in fact, was to do for humanity what Buffon had done for the animal creation. As the naturalist studied lions and tigers, so the novelist studied men and women. Yet he was no mere reporter. Photography and *procès-verbal* were not the essentials of his method. Observation gave him the facts of life, but his genius converted facts into truths, and truths into

REVIEWS

truth. He was, in a word, a marvellous combination of the artistic temperament with the scientific spirit. The latter he bequeathed to his disciples; the former was entirely his own. The distinction between such a book as M. Zola's *L'Assommoir* and such a book as Balzac's *Illusions Perdues* is the distinction between unimaginative realism and imaginative reality. 'All Balzac's characters,' said Baudelaire, 'are gifted with the same ardour of life that animated himself. All his fictions are as deeply coloured as dreams. Every mind is a weapon loaded to the muzzle with will. The very scullions have genius.' He was, of course, accused of being immoral. Few writers who deal directly with life escape that charge. His answer to the accusation was characteristic and conclusive. 'Whoever contributes his stone to the edifice of ideas,' he wrote, 'whoever proclaims an abuse, whoever sets his mark upon an evil to be abolished, always passes for immoral. If you are true in your portraits, if, by dint of daily and nightly toil, you succeed in writing the most difficult language in the world, the word immoral is thrown in your face.' The morals of the personages of the *Comédie Humaine* are simply the morals of the world around us. They are part of the artist's subject-matter; they are not part of his method. If there be any need of censure it is to life, not to literature, that it should be given. Balzac, besides, is essentially universal. He sees life from every point of view. He has no preferences and no prejudices. He does not try to prove anything. He feels that the spectacle of life contains its own secret. 'Il crée un monde et se tait.'

And what a world it is! What a panorama of passions! What a pell-mell of men and women! It

BALZAC IN ENGLISH

was said of Trollope that he increased the number of our acquaintances without adding to our visiting list; but after the *Comédie Humaine* one begins to believe that the only real people are the people who have never existed. Lucien de Rubempré, le Père Goriot, Ursule Mirouët, Marguerite Claës, the Baron Hulot, Madame Marneffe, le Cousin Pons, De Marsay—all bring with them a kind of contagious illusion of life. They have a fierce vitality about them: their existence is fervent and fiery-coloured; we not merely feel for them but we see them—they dominate our fancy and defy scepticism. A steady course of Balzac reduces our living friends to shadows, and our acquaintances to the shadows of shades. Who would care to go out to an evening party to meet Tomkins, the friend of one's boyhood, when one can sit at home with Lucien de Rubempré? It is pleasanter to have the entrée to Balzac's society than to receive cards from all the duchesses in May-fair.

In spite of this, there are many people who have declared the *Comédie Humaine* to be indigestible. Perhaps it is: but then what about truffles? Balzac's publisher refused to be disturbed by any such criticism as that. 'Indigestible, is it?' he exclaimed with what, for a publisher, was rare good sense. 'Well, I should hope so; who ever thinks of a dinner that isn't?' And our English publisher, Mr. Routledge, clearly agrees with M. Poulet-Malassis, as he is occupied in producing a complete translation of the *Comédie Humaine*. The two volumes that at present lie before us contain *César Birotteau*, that terrible tragedy of finance, and *L'Illustre Gaudissart*, the apotheosis of the commercial traveller, the *Duchesse de Langeais*, most

REVIEWS

marvellous of modern love stories, *Le Chef d'Œuvre Inconnu*, from which Mr. Henry James took his *Madonna of the Future*, and that extraordinary romance *Une Passion dans le Désert*. The choice of stories is quite excellent, but the translations are very unequal, and some of them are positively bad. *L'Illustre Gaudissart*, for instance, is full of the most grotesque mistakes, mistakes that would disgrace a schoolboy. 'Bon conseil vaut un œil dans la main' is translated 'Good advice is an egg in the hand'! 'Écus rebelles' is rendered 'rebellious lucre,' and such common expressions as 'faire la barbe,' 'attendre la vente,' 'n'entendre rien,' 'pâlir sur une affaire,' are all mistranslated. 'Des bois de quoi se faire un cure-dent' is not 'a few trees to slice into toothpicks,' but 'as much timber as would make a toothpick'; 'son horloge enfermée dans une grande armoire oblongue' is not 'a clock which he kept shut up in a large oblong closet' but simply a clock in a tall clock-case; 'journal viager' is not 'an annuity,' 'garce' is not the same as 'farce,' and 'dessins des Indes' are not 'drawings of the Indies.' On the whole, nothing can be worse than this translation, and if Mr. Routledge wishes the public to read his version of the *Comédie Humaine*, he should engage translators who have some slight knowledge of French.

César Birotteau is better, though it is not by any means free from mistakes. 'To suffer under the Maximum' is an absurd rendering of 'subir le maximum'; 'perse' is 'chintz,' not 'Persian chintz'; 'rendre le pain bénit' is not 'to take the wafer'; 'rivière' is hardly a 'fillet of diamonds'; and to translate 'son cœur avait un calus à l'endroit du loyer' by 'his heart was a callus in the direction

TWO NEW NOVELS

of a lease' is an insult to two languages. On the whole, the best version is that of the *Duchesse de Langeais*, though even this leaves much to be desired. Such a sentence as 'to imitate the rough logician who marched before the Pyrrhonians *while denying his own movement*' entirely misses the point of Balzac's 'imiter le rude logicien qui marchait devant les pyrrhoniens, qui niaient le mouvement.'

We fear Mr. Routledge's edition will not do. It is well printed and nicely bound; but his translators do not understand French. It is a great pity, for *La Comédie Humaine* is one of the masterpieces of the age.

Balzac's Novels in English. *The Duchesse de Langeais and Other Stories; César Birotteau.* (Routledge and Sons.)

TWO NEW NOVELS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, September 16, 1886.)

MOST modern novels are more remarkable for their crime than for their culture, and Mr. G. Manville Fenn's last venture is no exception to the general rule. *The Master of the Ceremonies* is turbid, terrifying and thrilling. It contains, besides many 'moving accidents by flood and field,' an elopement, an abduction, a bigamous marriage, an attempted assassination, a duel, a suicide, and a murder. The murder, we must acknowledge, is a masterpiece. It would do credit to Gaboriau, and should make Miss Braddon jealous. The *Newgate Calendar* itself contains nothing more fascinating, and what higher praise than this can be given to a sensational novel? Not that Lady Teigne, the hapless victim, is killed in any very new or subtle manner. She is merely strangled in bed, like Desdemona; but the circumstances of the

REVIEWS

murder are so peculiar that Claire Denville, in common with the reader, suspects her own father of being guilty, while the father is convinced that the real criminal is his eldest son. Stuart Denville himself, the Master of the Ceremonies, is most powerfully drawn. He is a penniless, padded dandy who, by a careful study of the 'grand style' in deportment, has succeeded in making himself the Brummel of the promenade and the autocrat of the Assembly Rooms. A light comedian by profession, he is suddenly compelled to play the principal part in a tragedy. His shallow, trivial nature is forced into the loftiest heroism, the noblest self-sacrifice. He becomes a hero against his will. The butterfly goes to martyrdom, the fop has to become fine. Round this character centres, or rather should centre, the psychological interest of the book, but unfortunately Mr. Fenn has insisted on crowding his story with unnecessary incident. He might have made of his novel 'A Soul's Tragedy,' but he has produced merely a melodrama in three volumes. *The Master of the Ceremonies* is a melancholy example of the fatal influence of Drury Lane on literature. Still, it should be read, for though Mr. Fenn has offered up his genius as a holocaust to Mr. Harris, he is never dull, and his style is on the whole very good. We wish, however, that he would not try to give articulate form to inarticulate exclamations. Such a passage as this is quite dreadful and fails, besides, in producing the effect it aims at:

'He—he—he, hi—hi—hi, hec—hec—hec, ha—ha—ha! ho—ho! Bless my—hey—ha! hey—ha! hugh—hugh—hugh! Oh dear me! Oh—why don't you—heck—heck—heck—heck! shut the—ho—ho—ho—ho—hugh—hugh—window before I—ho—ho—ho—ho!'

TWO NEW NOVELS

This horrible jargon is supposed to convey the impression of a lady coughing. It is, of course, a mere meaningless monstrosity on a par with spelling a sneeze. We hope that Mr. Fenn will not again try these theatrical tricks with language, for he possesses a rare art—the art of telling a story well.

A Statesman's Love, the author tells us in a rather mystical preface, was written 'to show that the alchemist-like transfiguration supposed to be wrought in our whole nature by that passion has no existence in fact,' but it cannot be said to prove this remarkable doctrine.

It is an exaggerated psychological study of a modern woman, a sort of picture by limelight, full of coarse colours and violent contrasts, not by any means devoid of cleverness but essentially false and over-emphasised. The heroine, Helen Rohan by name, tells her own story and, as she takes three volumes to do it in, we weary of the one point of view. Life to be intelligible should be approached from many sides, and valuable though the permanent *ego* may be in philosophy, the permanent *ego* in fiction soon becomes a bore. There are, however, some interesting scenes in the novel, and a good portrait of the Young Pretender, for though the heroine is absolutely a creation of the nineteenth century, the background of the story is historical and deals with the Rebellion of '45. As for the style, it is often original and picturesque; here and there are strong individual touches and brilliant passages; but there is also a good deal of pretence and a good deal of carelessness.

What can be said, for instance, about such expressions as these, taken at random from the second

REVIEWS

volume, — ‘evanishing,’ ‘solitary liveness,’ ‘in my *then* mood,’ ‘the bees *might advantage* by to-day,’ ‘I would not listen reverently as *did the other* some who went,’ ‘entangling myself in the net of this *retiari*,’ and why should Bassanio’s beautiful speech in the trial scene be deliberately attributed to Shylock? On the whole, *A Statesman’s Love* cannot be said to be an artistic success; but still it shows promise and, some day, the author who, to judge by the style, is probably a woman, may do good work. This, however, will require pruning, prudence and patience. We shall see.

(1) *The Master of the Ceremonies*. By G. Manville Fenn. (Ward and Downey.)

(2) *A Statesman’s Love*. By Emile Bauche. (Blackwood and Co.)

BEN JONSON

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, September 20, 1886.)

IN selecting Mr. John Addington Symonds to write the life of Ben Jonson for his series of ‘English Worthies,’ Mr. Lang, no doubt, exercised a wise judgment. Mr. Symonds, like the author of *Volpone*, is a scholar and a man of letters; his book on *Shakspeare’s Predecessors* showed a marvellous knowledge of the Elizabethan period, and he is a recognised authority on the Italian Renaissance. The last is not the least of his qualifications. Without a full appreciation of the meaning of the Humanistic movement it is impossible to understand the great struggle between the Classical form and the Romantic spirit which is the chief critical characteristic of the golden age of the English drama, an age when Shakespeare found his chief adversary, not among his contemporaries, but in

BEN JONSON

Seneca, and when Jonson armed himself with Aristotle to win the suffrages of a London audience. Mr. Symonds' book, consequently, will be opened with interest. It does not, of course, contain much that is new about Jonson's life. But the facts of Jonson's life are already well known, and in books of this kind what is true is of more importance than what is new, appreciation more valuable than discovery. Scotchmen, however, will, no doubt, be interested to find that Mr. Symonds has succeeded in identifying Jonson's crest with that of the Johnstones of Annandale, and the story of the way the literary Titan escaped from hanging, by proving that he could read, is graphically told.

On the whole, we have a vivid picture of the man as he lived. Where picturesqueness is required, Mr. Symonds is always good. The usual comparison with Dr. Johnson is, of course, brought out. Few of 'Rare Ben's' biographers spare us that, and the point is possibly a natural one to make. But when Mr. Symonds calls upon us to notice that both men made a journey to Scotland, and that 'each found in a Scotchman his biographer,' the parallel loses all value. There is an M in Monmouth and an M in Macedon, and Drummond of Hawthornden and Boswell of Auchinleck were both born the other side of the Tweed; but from such analogies nothing is to be learned. There is no surer way of destroying a similarity than to strain it.

As for Mr. Symonds' estimate of Jonson's genius, it is in many points quite excellent. He ranks him with the giants rather than with the gods, with those who compel our admiration by their untiring energy and huge strength of intellectual muscle, not with those 'who share the divine gifts of creative

REVIEWS

imagination and inevitable instinct.' Here he is right. Pelion more than Parnassus was Jonson's home. His art has too much effort about it, too much definite intention. His style lacks the charm of chance. Mr. Symonds is right also in the stress he lays on the extraordinary combination in Jonson's work of the most concentrated realism with encyclopædic erudition. In Jonson's comedies London slang and learned scholarship go hand in hand. Literature was as living a thing to him as life itself. He used his classical lore not merely to give form to his verse, but to give flesh and blood to the persons of his plays. He could build up a breathing creature out of quotations. He made the poets of Greece and Rome terribly modern, and introduced them to the oddest company. His very culture is an element in his coarseness. There are moments when one is tempted to liken him to a beast that has fed off books.

We cannot, however, agree with Mr. Symonds when he says that Jonson 'rarely touched more than the outside of character,' that his men and women are 'the incarnations of abstract properties rather than living human beings,' that they are in fact mere 'masqueraders and mechanical puppets.' Eloquence is a beautiful thing but rhetoric ruins many a critic, and Mr. Symonds is essentially rhetorical. When, for instance, he tells us that 'Jonson made masks,' while 'Dekker and Heywood created souls,' we feel that he is asking us to accept a crude judgment for the sake of a smart antithesis. It is, of course, true that we do not find in Jonson the same growth of character that we find in Shakespeare, and we may admit that most of the characters in Jonson's plays are, so to speak, ready-made. But a ready-made

BEN JONSON

character is not necessarily either mechanical or wooden, two epithets Mr. Symonds uses constantly in his criticism.

We cannot tell, and Shakespeare himself does not tell us, why Iago is evil, why Regan and Goneril have hard hearts, or why Sir Andrew Aguecheek is a fool. It is sufficient that they are what they are, and that nature gives warrant for their existence. If a character in a play is lifelike, if we recognise it as true to nature, we have no right to insist on the author explaining its genesis to us. We must accept it as it is: and in the hands of a good dramatist mere presentation can take the place of analysis, and indeed is often a more dramatic method, because a more direct one. And Jonson's characters are true to nature. They are in no sense abstractions; they are types. Captain Bobadil and Captain Tucca, Sir John Daw and Sir Amorous La Foole, Volpone and Mosca, Subtle and Sir Epicure Mammon, Mrs. Purecraft and the Rabbi Busy are all creatures of flesh and blood, none the less lifelike because they are labelled. In this point Mr. Symonds seems to us unjust towards Jonson.

We think, also, that a special chapter might have been devoted to Jonson as a literary critic. The creative activity of the English Renaissance is so great that its achievements in the sphere of criticism are often overlooked by the student. Then, for the first time, was language treated as an art. The laws of expression and composition were investigated and formularised. The importance of words was recognised. Romanticism, Realism and Classicism fought their first battles. The dramatists are full of literary and art criticisms, and amused the public with slashing articles on one another in the form of plays.

REVIEWS

Mr. Symonds, of course, deals with Jonson in his capacity as a critic, and always with just appreciation, but the whole subject is one that deserves fuller and more special treatment.

Some small inaccuracies, too, should be corrected in the second edition. Dryden, for instance, was not 'Jonson's successor on the laureate's throne,' as Mr. Symonds eloquently puts it, for Sir William Davenant came between them, and when one remembers the predominance of rhyme in Shakespeare's early plays, it is too much to say that 'after the production of the first part of *Tamburlaine* blank verse became the regular dramatic metre of the public stage.' Shakespeare did not accept blank verse at once as a gift from Marlowe's hand, but himself arrived at it after a long course of experiments in rhyme. Indeed, some of Mr. Symonds' remarks on Marlowe are very curious. To say of his *Edward II.*, for instance, that it 'is not at all inferior to the work of Shakespeare's younger age,' is very niggardly and inadequate praise, and comes strangely from one who has elsewhere written with such appreciation of Marlowe's great genius; while to call Marlowe Jonson's 'master' is to make for him an impossible claim. In comedy Marlowe has nothing whatever to teach Jonson; in tragedy Jonson sought for the classical not the romantic form.

As for Mr. Symonds' style, it is, as usual, very fluent, very picturesque and very full of colour. Here and there, however, it is really irritating. Such a sentence as 'the tavern had the defects of its quality' is an awkward Gallicism; and when Mr. Symonds, after genially comparing Jonson's blank verse to the front of Whitehall (a comparison, by the way, that would have enraged the poet beyond

THE POETS' CORNER

measure) proceeds to play a fantastic aria on the same string, and tells us that 'Massinger reminds us of the intricacies of Sansovino, Shakespeare of Gothic aisles or heaven's cathedral . . . Ford of glittering Corinthian colonnades, Webster of vaulted crypts, . . . Marlowe of masoned clouds, and Marston, in his better moments, of the fragmentary vigour of a Roman ruin,' one begins to regret that any one ever thought of the unity of the arts. Similes such as these obscure; they do not illumine. To say that Ford is like a glittering Corinthian colonnade adds nothing to our knowledge of either Ford or Greek architecture. Mr. Symonds has written some charming poetry, but his prose, unfortunately, is always poetical prose, never the prose of a poet. Still, the volume is worth reading, though decidedly Mr. Symonds, to use one of his own phrases, has 'the defects of his quality.'

'English Worthies.' Edited by Andrew Lang. *Ben Jonson.*
By John Addington Symonds. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

THE POETS' CORNER

I

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, September 27, 1886.)

AMONG the social problems of the nineteenth century the tramp has always held an important position, but his appearance among the nineteenth-century poets is extremely remarkable. Not that a tramp's mode of life is at all unsuited to the development of the poetic faculty. Far from it! He, if any one, should possess that freedom of mood which is so essential to the artist, for he has no taxes to pay and no relations to worry

REVIEWS

him. The man who possesses a permanent address, and whose name is to be found in the Directory, is necessarily limited and localised. Only the tramp has absolute liberty of living. Was not Homer himself a vagrant, and did not Thespis go about in a caravan? It is then with feelings of intense expectation that we open the little volume that lies before us. It is entitled *Low Down*, by Two Tramps, and is marvellous even to look at. It is clear that art has at last reached the criminal classes. The cover is of brown paper like the covers of Mr. Whistler's brochures. The printing exhibits every fantastic variation of type, and the pages range in colour from blue to brown, from grey to sage green and from rose pink to chrome yellow. The Philistines may sneer at this chromatic chaos, but we do not. As the painters are always pilfering from the poets, why should not the poet annex the domain of the painter and use colour for the expression of his moods and music: blue for sentiment, and red for passion, grey for cultured melancholy, and green for descriptions? The book, then, is a kind of miniature rainbow, and with all its varied sheets is as lovely as an advertisement hoarding. As for the peripatetics—alas! they are not nightingales. Their note is harsh and rugged, Mr. G. R. Sims is the god of their idolatry, their style is the style of the Surrey Theatre, and we are sorry to see that that disregard of the rights of property which always characterises the able-bodied vagrant is extended by our tramps from the defensible pilfering from hen-roosts to the indefensible pilfering from poets. When we read such lines as:

And builded him a pyramid, four square,
Open to all the sky and every wind,

THE POETS' CORNER

we feel that bad as poultry-snatching is, plagiarism is worse. *Facilis descensus Averno!* From highway robbery and crimes of violence one sinks gradually to literary petty larceny. However, there are coarsely effective poems in the volume, such as *A Super's Philosophy*, *Dick Hewlett*, a ballad of the Californian school, and *Gentleman Bill*; and there is one rather pretty poem called *The Return of Spring*:

When robins hop on naked boughs,
And swell their throats with song,
When lab'ers trudge behind their ploughs,
And blithely whistle their teams along;

When glints of summer sunshine chase
Park shadows on the distant hills,
And scented tufts of pansies grace
Moist grotts that 'scape rude Borean chills.

The last line is very disappointing. No poet, nowadays, should write of 'rude Boreas'; he might just as well call the dawn 'Aurora,' or say that 'Flora decks the enamelled meads.' But there are some nice touches in the poem, and it is pleasant to find that tramps have their harmless moments. On the whole, the volume, if it is not quite worth reading, is at least worth looking at. The fool's motley in which it is arrayed is extremely curious and extremely characteristic.

Mr. Irwin's muse comes to us more simply clad, and more gracefully. She gains her colour-effect from the poet, not from the publisher. No cockneyism or colloquialism mars the sweetness of her speech. She finds music for every mood, and form for every feeling. In art as in life the law of heredity holds good. *On est toujours fils de quelqu'un.* And so it is easy to see that Mr. Irwin is a

REVIEWS

fervent admirer of Mr. Matthew Arnold. But he is in no sense a plagiarist. He has succeeded in studying a fine poet without stealing from him—a very difficult thing to do—and though many of the reeds through which he blows have been touched by other lips, yet he is able to draw new music from them. Like most of our younger poets, Mr. Irwin is at his best in his sonnets, and those entitled *The Seeker after God* and *The Pillar of the Empire* are really remarkable. All through this volume, however, one comes across good work, and the descriptions of Indian scenery are excellent. India, in fact, is the picturesque background to these poems, and her monstrous beasts, strange flowers and fantastic birds are used with much subtlety for the production of artistic effect. Perhaps there is a little too much about the pipal-tree, but when we have a proper sense of Imperial unity, no doubt the pipal-tree will be as dear and as familiar to us as the oaks and elms of our own woodlands.

(1) *Low Down: Wayside Thoughts in Ballad and Other Verse.* By Two Tramps. (Redway.)

(2) *Rhymes and Renderings.* By H. C. Irwin. (David Stott.)

A RIDE THROUGH MOROCCO

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, October 8, 1886.)

MOROCCO is a sort of paradox among countries, for though it lies westward of Piccadilly yet it is purely Oriental in character, and though it is but three hours' sail from Europe yet it makes you feel (to use the forcible expression of an American writer) as if you had been 'taken up by the scruff of the neck and set down in the Old Testament.' Mr. Hugh Stutfield has ridden twelve hundred miles through it,

A RIDE THROUGH MOROCCO

penetrated to Fez and Wazan, seen the lovely gate at Mequinez and the Hassen Tower by Rabat, feasted with sheikhs and fought with robbers, lived in an atmosphere of Moors, mosques and mirages, visited the city of the lepers and the slave-market of Sus, and played loo under the shadow of the Atlas Mountains. He is not an Herodotus nor a Sir John Mandeville, but he tells his stories very pleasantly. His book, on the whole, is delightful reading, for though Morocco is picturesque he does not weary us with word-painting; though it is poor he does not bore us with platitudes. Now and then he indulges in a traveller's licence and thrills the simple reader with statements as amazing as they are amusing. The Moorish coinage, he tells us, is so cumbersome that if a man gives you change for half-a-crown you have to hire a donkey to carry it away; the Moorish language is so guttural that no one can ever hope to pronounce it aright who has not been brought up within hearing of the grunting of camels, a steady course of sneezing being, consequently, the only way by which a European can acquire anything like the proper accent; the Sultan does not know how much he is married, but he unquestionably is so to a very large extent: on the principle that you cannot have too much of a good thing a woman is valued in proportion to her stoutness, and so far from there being any reduction made in the marriage-market for taking a quantity, you must pay so much per pound; the Arabs believe the Shereef of Wazan to be such a holy man that, if he is guilty of taking champagne, the forbidden wine is turned into milk as he quaffs it, and if he gets extremely drunk he is merely in a mystical trance.

REVIEWS

Mr. Stutfield, however, has his serious moments, and his account of the commerce, government and social life of the Moors is extremely interesting. It must be confessed that the picture he draws is in many respects a very tragic one. The Moors are the masters of a beautiful country and of many beautiful arts, but they are paralysed by their fatalism and pillaged by their rulers. Few races, indeed, have had a more terrible fall than these Moors. Of the great intellectual civilisation of the Arabs no trace remains. The names of Averroes and Almaimon, of Al Abbas and Ben Husa are quite unknown. Fez, once the Athens of Africa, the cradle of the sciences, is now a mere commercial caravansary. Its universities have vanished, its library is almost empty. Freedom of thought has been killed by the Koran, freedom of living by bad government. But Mr. Stutfield is not without hopes for the future. So far from agreeing with Lord Salisbury that 'Morocco may go her own way,' he strongly supports Captain Warren's proposition that we should give up Gibraltar to Spain in exchange for Ceuta, and thereby prevent the Mediterranean from becoming a French lake, and give England a new granary for corn. The Moorish Empire, he warns us, is rapidly breaking up, and if in the 'general scramble for Africa' that has already begun, the French gain possession of Morocco, he points out that our supremacy over the Straits will be lost. Whatever may be thought of Mr. Stutfield's political views, and his suggestions for 'multiple control' and 'collective European action,' there is no doubt that in Morocco England has interests to defend and a mission to pursue, and this part of the book should be carefully studied. As

THE CHILDREN OF THE POETS

for the general reader who, we fear, is not as a rule interested in the question of 'multiple control,' if he is a sportsman, he will find in *El Magreb* a capital account of pig-sticking; if he is artistic, he will be delighted to know that the importation of magenta into Morocco is strictly prohibited; if criminal jurisprudence has any charms for him, he can examine a code that punishes slander by rubbing cayenne pepper into the lips of the offender; and if he is merely lazy, he can take a pleasant ride of twelve hundred miles in Mr. Stutfield's company without stirring out of his armchair.

El Magreb: Twelve Hundred Miles' Ride through Morocco. By Hugh Stutfield. (Sampson Low, Marston and Co.)

THE CHILDREN OF THE POETS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, October 14, 1886.)

THE idea of this book is exceedingly charming. As children themselves are the perfect flowers of life, so a collection of the best poems written on children should be the most perfect of all anthologies. Yet, the book itself is not by any means a success. Many of the loveliest child-poems in our literature are excluded and not a few feeble and trivial poems are inserted. The editor's work is characterised by sins of omission and of commission, and the collection, consequently, is very incomplete and very unsatisfactory. Andrew Marvell's exquisite poem *The Picture of Little T. C.*, for instance, does not appear in Mr. Robertson's volume, nor the *Young Love* of the same author, nor the beautiful elegy Ben Jonson wrote on the death of Salathiel Pavy, the little boy-actor of his plays. Waller's verses also, *To My Young Lady*

REVIEWS

Lucy Sidney, deserve a place in an anthology of this kind, and so do Mr. Matthew Arnold's lines *To a Gipsy Child*, and Edgar Allan Poe's *Annabel Lee*, a little lyric full of strange music and strange romance. There is possibly much to be said in favour of such a poem as that which ends with

And I thank my God with falling tears
For the things in the bottom drawer :

but how different it is from

I was a child, and *she* was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea ;
But we loved with a love that was more than love—
I and my Annabel Lee ;
With a love that the wingèd Seraphs of Heaven
Coveted her and me

The selection from Blake, again, is very incomplete, many of the loveliest poems being excluded, such as those on *The Little Girl Lost* and *The Little Girl Found*, the *Cradle Song*, *Infant Joy*, and others ; nor can we find Sir Henry Wotton's *Hymn upon the Birth of Prince Charles*, Sir William Jones's dainty four-line epigram on *The Babe*, or the delightful lines *To T. L. H., A Child*, by Charles Lamb.

The gravest omission, however, is certainly that of Herrick. Not a single poem of his appears in Mr. Robertson's collection. And yet no English poet has written of children with more love and grace and delicacy. His *Ode on the Birth of Our Saviour*, his poem *To His Saviour, A Child: A Present by a Child*, his *Graces for Children*, and his many lovely epitaphs on children are all of them exquisite works of art, simple, sweet and sincere.

An English anthology of child-poems that ex-

THE CHILDREN OF THE POETS

cludes Herrick is as an English garden without its roses and an English woodland without its singing birds; and for one verse of Herrick we would gladly give in exchange even those long poems by Mr. Ashby-Sterry, Miss Menella Smedley, and Mr. Lewis Morris (of Penrhyn), to which Mr. Robertson has assigned a place in his collection. Mr. Robertson, also, should take care when he publishes a poem to publish it correctly. Mr. Bret Harte's *Dickens in Camp*, for instance, is completely spoiled by two ridiculous misprints. In the first line 'dimpling' is substituted for 'drifting' to the entire ruin of rhyme and reason, and in the ninth verse 'the *pensive* glory that fills the Kentish hills' appears as 'the *Persian* glory . . .' with a large capital P! Mistakes such as these are quite unpardonable, and make one feel that, perhaps, after all it was fortunate for Herrick that he was left out. A poet can survive everything but a misprint.

As for Mr. Robertson's preface, like most of the prefaces in the Canterbury Series, it is very carelessly written. Such a sentence as 'I . . . believe that Mrs. Piatt's poems, in particular, will come to many readers, fresh, as well as delightful contributions from across the ocean,' is painful to read. Nor is the matter much better than the manner. It is fantastic to say that Raphael's pictures of the Madonna and Child dealt a deadly blow to the monastic life, and to say, with reference to Greek art, that 'Cupid by the side of Venus enables us to forget that most of her sighs are wanton' is a very crude bit of art criticism indeed. Wordsworth, again, should hardly be spoken of as one who 'was not, in the general, a man from whom human sympathies welled profusely,' but this criticism is as

REVIEWS

nothing compared to the passage where Mr. Robertson tells us that the scene between Arthur and Hubert in *King John* is not true to nature because the child's pleadings for his life are playful as well as piteous. Indeed, Mr. Robertson, forgetting Maillius as completely as he misunderstands Arthur, states very clearly that Shakespeare has not given us any deep readings of child nature. Paradoxes are always charming, but judgments such as these are not paradoxical; they are merely provincial.

On the whole, Mr. Robertson's book will not do. It is, we fully admit, an industrious compilation, but it is not an anthology, it is not a selection of the best, for it lacks the discrimination and good taste which is the essence of selection, and for the want of which no amount of industry can atone. The child-poems of our literature have still to be edited.

The Children of the Poets: An Anthology from English and American Writers of Three Generations. Edited, with an Introduction, by Eric S. Robertson. (Walter Scott.)

NEW NOVELS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, October 28, 1886.)

ASTRAY: *A Tale of a Country Town*, is a very serious volume. It has taken four people to write it, and even to read it requires assistance. Its dulness is premeditated and deliberate and comes from a laudable desire to rescue fiction from flippancy. It is, in fact, tedious from the noblest motives and wearisome through its good intentions. Yet the story itself is not an uninteresting one. Quite the contrary. It deals with the attempt of a young doctor to build up a noble manhood on the ruins of a wasted youth. Burton King,

NEW NOVELS

while little more than a reckless lad, forges the name of a dying man, is arrested and sent to penal servitude for seven years. On his discharge he comes to live with his sisters in a little country town and finds that his real punishment begins when he is free, for prison has made him a pariah. Still, through the nobility and self-sacrifice of his life, he gradually wins himself a position, and ultimately marries the prettiest girl in the book. His character is, on the whole, well drawn, and the authors have almost succeeded in making him good without making him priggish. The method, however, by which the story is told is extremely tiresome. It consists of an interminable series of long letters by different people and of extracts from various diaries. The book consequently is piecemeal and unsatisfactory. It fails in producing any unity of effect. It contains the rough material for a story, but is not a completed work of art. It is, in fact, more of a notebook than a novel. We fear that too many collaborators are like too many cooks and spoil the dinner. Still, in this tale of a country town there are certain solid qualities, and it is a book that one can with perfect safety recommend to other people.

Miss Rhoda Broughton belongs to a very different school. No one can ever say of her that she has tried to separate flippancy from fiction, and whatever harsh criticisms may be passed on the construction of her sentences, she at least possesses that one touch of vulgarity that makes the whole world kin. We are sorry, however, to see from a perusal of *Betty's Visions* that Miss Broughton has been attending the meetings of the Psychical Society in search of copy. Mysticism is not her mission, and telepathy should be left to Messrs. Myers and Gurney.

REVIEWS

In Philistia lies Miss Broughton's true sphere, and to Philistia she should return. She knows more about the vanities of this world than about this world's visions, and a possible garrison town is better than an impossible ghost-land.

That Other Person, who gives Mrs. Alfred Hunt the title for her three-volume novel, is a young girl, by name Hester Langdale, who for the sake of Mr. Godfrey Daylesford sacrifices everything a woman can sacrifice, and, on his marrying some one else, becomes a hospital nurse. The hospital nurse idea is perhaps used by novelists a little too often in cases of this kind; still, it has an artistic as well as an ethical value. The interest of the story centres, however, in Mr. Daylesford, who marries not for love but for ambition, and is rather severely punished for doing so. Mrs. Daylesford has a sister called Polly who develops, according to the approved psychological method, from a hobbledehoy girl into a tender sweet woman. Polly is delightfully drawn, but the most attractive character in the book, strangely enough, is Mr. Godfrey Daylesford. He is very weak, but he is very charming. So charming indeed is he, that it is only when one closes the book that one thinks of censuring him. While we are in direct contact with him we are fascinated. Such a character has at any rate the morality of truth about it. Here literature has faithfully followed life. Mrs. Hunt writes a very pleasing style, bright and free from affectation. Indeed, everything in her work is clever except the title.

A Child of the Revolution is by the accomplished authoress of the *Atelier du Lys*. The scene opens in France in 1793, and the plot is extremely ingenious. The wife of Jacques Vaudès, a Lyons

NEW NOVELS

deputy, loses by illness her baby girl while her husband is absent in Paris where he has gone to see Danton. At the instigation of an old priest she adopts a child of the same age, a little orphan of noble birth, whose parents have died in the Reign of Terror, and passes it off as her own. Her husband, a stern and ardent Republican, worships the child with a passion like that of Jean Valjean for Cosette, nor is it till she has grown to perfect womanhood that he discovers that he has given his love to the daughter of his enemy. This is a noble story, but the workmanship, though good of its kind, is hardly adequate to the idea. The style lacks grace, movement and variety. It is correct but monotonous. Seriousness, like property, has its duties as well as its rights, and the first duty of a novel is to please. *A Child of the Revolution* hardly does that. Still it has merits.

Aphrodite is a romance of ancient Hellas. The supposed date, as given in the first line of Miss Safford's admirable translation, is 551 B.C. This, however, is probably a misprint. At least, we cannot believe that so careful an archæologist as Ernst Eckstein would talk of a famous school of sculpture existing at Athens in the sixth century, and the whole character of the civilisation is of a much later date. The book may be described as a new setting of the tale of Acontius and Cydippe, and though Eckstein is a sort of literary Tadema and cares more for his backgrounds than he does for his figures, still he can tell a story very well, and his hero is made of flesh and blood. As regards the style, the Germans have not the same feeling as we have about technicalities in literature. To our ears such words as 'phoreion,' 'secos,' 'oionistes,' 'Thyrides' and the

REVIEWS

like sound harshly in a novel and give an air of pedantry, not of picturesqueness. Yet in its tone *Aphrodite* reminds us of the late Greek novels. Indeed, it might be one of the lost tales of Miletus. It deserves to have many readers and a better binding.

(1) *Astray: A Tale of a Country Town.* By Charlotte M. Yonge, Mary Bramston, Christabel Coleridge and Esmé Stuart. (Hatchards.)

(2) *Betty's Visions.* By Rhoda Broughton. (Routledge and Sons.)

(3) *That Other Person.* By Mrs. Alfred Hunt. (Chatto and Windus.)

(4) *A Child of the Revolution.* By the Author of *Mademoiselle Mori.* (Hatchards.)

(5) *Aphrodite.* Translated from the German of Ernst Eckstein by Mary J. Safford. (New York: Williams and Gottsberger; London: Trübner and Co.)

A POLITICIAN'S POETRY

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, November 3, 1886.)

ALTHOUGH it is against etiquette to quote Greek in Parliament, Homer has always been a great favourite with our statesmen and, indeed, may be said to be almost a factor in our political life. For as the cross-benches form a refuge for those who have no minds to make up, so those who cannot make up their minds always take to Homeric studies. Many of our leaders have sulked in their tents with Achilles after some violent political crisis and, enraged at the fickleness of fortune, more than one has given up to poetry what was obviously meant for party. It would be unjust, however, to regard Lord Carnarvon's translation of the *Odyssey* as being in any sense a political manifesto. Between Calypso and the colonies

A POLITICIAN'S POETRY

there is no connection, and the search for Penelope has nothing to do with the search for a policy. The love of literature alone has produced this version of the marvellous Greek epic, and to the love of literature alone it appeals. As Lord Carnarvon says very truly in his preface, each generation in turn delights to tell the story of Odysseus in its own language, for the story is one that never grows old.

Of the labours of his predecessors in translation Lord Carnarvon makes ample recognition, though we acknowledge that we do not consider Pope's *Homer* 'the work of a great poet,' and we must protest that there is more in Chapman than 'quaint Elizabethan conceits.' The metre he has selected is blank verse, which he regards as the best compromise between 'the inevitable redundancy of rhyme and the stricter accuracy of prose.' This choice is, on the whole, a sensible one. Blank verse undoubtedly gives the possibility of a clear and simple rendering of the original. Upon the other hand, though we may get Homer's meaning, we often miss his music. The ten-syllabled line brings but a faint echo of the long roll of the Homeric hexameter, its rapid movement and continuous harmony. Besides, except in the hands of a great master of song, blank verse is apt to be tedious, and Lord Carnarvon's use of the weak ending, his habit of closing the line with an unimportant word, is hardly consistent with the stateliness of an epic, however valuable it might be in dramatic verse. Now and then, also, Lord Carnarvon exaggerates the value of the Homeric adjective, and for one word in the Greek gives us a whole line in the English. The simple *ἐσπέριος*, for instance, is converted into 'And when the shades

REVIEWS

of evening fall around,' in the second book, and elsewhere purely decorative epithets are expanded into elaborate descriptions. However, there are many pleasing qualities in Lord Carnarvon's verse, and though it may not contain much subtlety of melody, still it has often a charm and sweetness of its own.

The description of Calypso's garden, for example, is excellent :

Around the grotto grew a goodly grove,
Alder, and poplar, and the cypress sweet ;
And the deep-winged sea-birds found their haunt,
And owls and hawks, and long-tongued cormorants,
Who joy to live upon the briny flood.
And o'er the face of the deep cave a vine
Wove its wild tangles and clustering grapes.
Four fountains too, each from the other turned,
Poured their white waters, whilst the grassy meads
Bloomed with the parsley and the violet's flower.

The story of the Cyclops is not very well told. The grotesque humour of the Giant's promise hardly appears in

Thee then, Noman, last of all
Will I devour, and this thy gift shall be,

and the bitter play on words Odysseus makes, the pun on *μητις*, in fact, is not noticed. The idyll of Nausicaa, however, is very gracefully translated, and there is a great deal that is delightful in the Circe episode. For simplicity of diction this is also very good :

So to Olympus through the woody isle
Hermes departed, and I went my way
To Circe's halls, sore troubled in my mind.
But by the fair-tressed Goddess' gate I stood,
And called upon her, and she heard my voice,
And forth she came and oped the shining doors
And bade me in ; and sad at heart I went.

HISTORY OF THE RENAISSANCE

Then did she set me on a stately chair,
Studded with silver nails of cunning work,
With footstool for my feet, and mixed a draught
Of her foul witcheries in golden cup,
For evil was her purpose. From her hand
I took the cup and drained it to the dregs,
Nor felt the magic charm; but with her rod
She smote me, and she said, 'Go, get thee hence
And herd thee with thy fellows in the stye.'
So spake she, and straightway I drew my sword
Upon the witch, and threatened her with death.

Lord Carnarvon, on the whole, has given us a very pleasing version of the first half of the *Odyssey*. His translation is done in a scholarly and careful manner and deserves much praise. It is not quite Homer, of course, but no translation can hope to be that, for no work of art can afford to lose its style or to give up the manner that is essential to it. Still, those who cannot read Greek will find much beauty in it, and those who can will often gain a charming reminiscence.

The Odyssey of Homer. Books I.-XII. Translated into English Verse by the Earl of Carnarvon. (Macmillan and Co.)

MR. SYMONDS' HISTORY OF THE RENAISSANCE

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, November 10, 1886.)

MR. SYMONDS has at last finished his history of the Italian Renaissance. The two volumes just published deal with the intellectual and moral conditions in Italy during the seventy years of the sixteenth century which followed the coronation of Charles the Fifth at Bologna, an era to which Mr. Symonds gives the name of the Catholic Reaction, and they contain

REVIEWS

a most interesting and valuable account of the position of Spain in the Italian peninsula, the conduct of the Tridentine Council, the specific organisation of the Holy Office and the Company of Jesus, and the state of society upon which those forces were brought to bear. In his previous volumes Mr. Symonds had regarded the past rather as a picture to be painted than as a problem to be solved. In these two last volumes, however, he shows a clearer appreciation of the office of history. The art of the picturesque chronicler is completed by something like the science of the true historian, the critical spirit begins to manifest itself, and life is not treated as a mere spectacle, but the laws of its evolution and progress are investigated also. We admit that the desire to represent life at all costs under dramatic conditions still accompanies Mr. Symonds, and that he hardly realises that what seems romance to us was harsh reality to those who were engaged in it. Like most dramatists, also, he is more interested in the psychological exceptions than in the general rule. He has something of Shakespeare's sovereign contempt of the masses. The people stir him very little, but he is fascinated by great personalities. Yet it is only fair to remember that the age itself was one of exaggerated individualism and that literature had not yet become a mouthpiece for the utterances of humanity. Men appreciated the aristocracy of intellect, but with the democracy of suffering they had no sympathy. The cry from the brickfields had still to be heard. Mr. Symonds' style, too, has much improved. Here and there, it is true, we come across traces of the old manner, as in the apocalyptic vision of the seven devils that entered

HISTORY OF THE RENAISSANCE

Italy with the Spaniard, and the description of the Inquisition as a Belial-Moloch, a 'hideous idol whose face was blackened with soot from burning human flesh.' Such a sentence, also, as 'over the Dead Sea of social putrefaction floated the sickening oil of Jesuitical hypocrisy,' reminds us that rhetoric has not yet lost its charms for Mr. Symonds. Still, on the whole, the style shows far more reserve, balance and sobriety, than can be found in the earlier volumes where violent antithesis forms the predominant characteristic, and accuracy is often sacrificed to an adjective.

Amongst the most interesting chapters of the book are those on the Inquisition, on Sarpi, the great champion of the severance of Church from State, and on Giordano Bruno. Indeed the story of Bruno's life, from his visit to London and Oxford, his sojourn in Paris and wanderings through Germany, down to his betrayal at Venice and martyrdom at Rome, is most powerfully told, and the estimate of the value of his philosophy and the relation he holds to modern science, is at once just and appreciative. The account also of Ignatius Loyola and the rise of the Society of Jesus is extremely interesting, though we cannot think that Mr. Symonds is very happy in his comparison of the Jesuits to 'fanatics laying stones upon a railway' or 'dynamiters blowing up an emperor or a corner of Westminster Hall.' Such a judgment is harsh and crude in expression and more suitable to the clamour of the Protestant Union than to the dignity of the true historian. Mr. Symonds, however, is rarely deliberately unfair, and there is no doubt but that his work on the Catholic Reaction is a most valuable contribution to modern history—so valuable,

REVIEWS

indeed, that in the account he gives of the Inquisition in Venice it would be well worth his while to bring the picturesque fiction of the text into some harmony with the plain facts of the footnote.

On the poetry of the sixteenth century Mr. Symonds has, of course, a great deal to say, and on such subjects he always writes with ease, grace, and delicacy of perception. We admit that we weary sometimes of the continual application to literature of epithets appropriate to plastic and pictorial art. The conception of the unity of the arts is certainly of great value, but in the present condition of criticism it seems to us that it would be more useful to emphasise the fact that each art has its separate method of expression. The essay on Tasso, however, is delightful reading, and the position the poet holds towards modern music and modern sentiment is analysed with much subtlety. The essay on Marino also is full of interest. We have often wondered whether those who talk so glibly of Euphuism and Marinism in literature have ever read either *Euphues* or the *Adone*. To the latter they can have no better guide than Mr. Symonds, whose description of the poem is most fascinating. Marino, like many greater men, has suffered much from his disciples, but he himself was a master of graceful fancy and of exquisite felicity of phrase; not, of course, a great poet but certainly an artist in poetry and one to whom language is indebted. Even those conceits that Mr. Symonds feels bound to censure have something charming about them. The continual use of periphrases is undoubtedly a grave fault in style, yet who but a pedant would really quarrel with such periphrases as *sirena de' boschi* for the nightingale, or *il novello Edimione* for Galileo?

HISTORY OF THE RENAISSANCE

From the poets Mr. Symonds passes to the painters: not those great artists of Florence and Venice of whom he has already written, but the Eclectics of Bologna, the Naturalists of Naples and Rome. This chapter is too polemical to be pleasant. The one on music is much better, and Mr. Symonds gives us a most interesting description of the gradual steps by which the Italian genius passed from poetry and painting to melody and song, till the whole of Europe thrilled with the marvel and mystery of this new language of the soul. Some small details should perhaps be noticed. It is hardly accurate, for instance, to say that Monteverde's *Orfeo* was the first form of the recitative-Opera, as Peri's *Dafne* and *Euridice* and Cavaliere's *Rappresentazione* preceded it by some years, and it is somewhat exaggerated to say that 'under the régime of the Commonwealth the national growth of English music received a check from which it never afterwards recovered,' as it was with Cromwell's auspices that the first English Opera was produced, thirteen years before any Opera was regularly established in Paris. The fact that England did not make such development in music as Italy and Germany did, must be ascribed to other causes than 'the prevalence of Puritan opinion.'

These, however, are minor points. Mr. Symonds is to be warmly congratulated on the completion of his history of the Renaissance in Italy. It is a most wonderful monument of literary labour, and its value to the student of Humanism cannot be doubted. We have often had occasion to differ from Mr. Symonds on questions of detail, and we have more than once felt it our duty to protest against the

REVIEWS

rhetoric and over-emphasis of his style, but we fully recognise the importance of his work and the impetus he has given to the study of one of the vital periods of the world's history. Mr. Symonds' learning has not made him a pedant; his culture has widened not narrowed his sympathies, and though he can hardly be called a great historian, yet he will always occupy a place in English literature as one of the remarkable men of letters in the nineteenth century.

Renaissance in Italy: The Catholic Reaction. In Two Parts. By John Addington Symonds. (Smith, Elder and Co.)

A 'JOLLY' ART CRITIC

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, November 18, 1886.)

THERE is a healthy bank-holiday atmosphere about this book which is extremely pleasant. Mr. Quilter is entirely free from affectation of any kind. He rollicks through art with the recklessness of the tourist and describes its beauties with the enthusiasm of the auctioneer. To many, no doubt, he will seem to be somewhat blatant and bumptious, but we prefer to regard him as being simply British. Mr. Quilter is the apostle of the middle classes, and we are glad to welcome his gospel. After listening so long to the Don Quixote of art, to listen once to Sancho Panza is both salutary and refreshing.

As for his *Sententiæ*, they differ very widely in character and subject. Some of them are ethical, such as 'Humility may be carried too far'; some literary, as 'For one Froude there are a thousand Mrs. Markhams'; and some scientific, as 'Objects which are near display more detail than those which

A 'JOLLY' ART CRITIC

are further off.' Some, again, breathe a fine spirit of optimism, as 'Picturesqueness is the birthright of the bargee'; others are jubilant, as 'Paint firm and be jolly'; and many are purely autobiographical, such as No. 97, 'Few of us understand what it is that we mean by Art.' Nor is Mr. Quilter's manner less interesting than his matter. He tells us that at this festive season of the year, with Christmas and roast beef looming before us, 'Similes drawn from eating and its results occur most readily to the mind.' So he announces that 'Subject is the diet of painting,' that 'Perspective is the bread of art,' and that 'Beauty is in some way like jam'; drawings, he points out, 'are not made by recipe like puddings,' nor is art composed of 'suet, raisins, and candied peel,' though Mr. Cecil Lawson's landscapes do 'smack of indigestion.' Occasionally, it is true, he makes daring excursions into other realms of fancy, as when he says that 'in the best Reynolds landscapes, one seems *to smell the sawdust*,' or that 'advance in art is of a *kangaroo* character'; but, on the whole, he is happiest in his eating similes, and the secret of his style is evidently '*La métaphore vient en mangeant*.'

About artists and their work Mr. Quilter has, of course, a great deal to say. Sculpture he regards as 'Painting's poor relation'; so, with the exception of a jaunty allusion to the 'rough modelling' of Tanagra figurines he hardly refers at all to the plastic arts; but on painters he writes with much vigour and joviality. Holbein's wonderful Court portraits naturally do not give him much pleasure; in fact, he compares them as works of art to the sham series of Scottish kings at Holyrood; but Doré, he tells us, had a wider imaginative range in all

REVIEWS

subjects where the gloomy and the terrible played leading parts than probably any artist who ever lived, and may be called 'the Carlyle of artists.' In Gainsborough he sees 'a plainness almost amounting to brutality,' while 'vulgarity and snobbishness' are the chief qualities he finds in Sir Joshua Reynolds. He has grave doubts whether Sir Frederick Leighton's work is really 'Greek, after all,' and can discover in it but little of 'rocky Ithaca.' Mr. Poynter, however, is a cart-horse compared to the President, and Frederick Walker was 'a dull Greek' because he had no 'sympathy with poetry.' Linnell's pictures are 'a sort of "Up, Guards, and at 'em" paintings,' and Mason's exquisite idylls are 'as national as a Jingo poem'! Mr. Birket Foster's landscapes 'smile at one much in the same way that Mr. Carker used to "flash his teeth,"' and Mr. John Collier gives his sitter 'a cheerful slap on the back, before he says, like a shampooer in a Turkish bath, "Next man!"' Mr. Herkomer's art is, 'if not a catch-penny art, at all events a catch-many-pounds art,' and Mr. W. B. Richmond is a 'clever trifler,' who 'might do really good work' 'if he would employ his time in learning to paint.' It is obviously unnecessary for us to point out how luminous these criticisms are, how delicate in expression. The remarks on Sir Joshua Reynolds alone exemplify the truth of *Sententia* No. 19, 'From a picture we gain but little more than we bring.' On the general principles of art Mr. Quilter writes with equal lucidity. That there is a difference between colour and colours, that an artist, be he portrait-painter or dramatist, always reveals himself in his manner, are ideas that can hardly be said to occur to him; but Mr. Quilter really does his best and bravely faces every difficulty

A 'JOLLY' ART CRITIC

in modern art, with the exception of Mr. Whistler. Painting, he tells us, is 'of a different quality to mathematics,' and finish in art is 'adding more fact'! Portrait painting is a bad pursuit for an emotional artist as it destroys his personality and his sympathy; however, even for the emotional artist there is hope, as a portrait can be converted into a picture 'by adding to the likeness of the sitter some dramatic interest or some picturesque adjunct'! As for etchings, they are of two kinds—British and foreign. The latter fail in 'propriety.' Yet, 'really fine etching is as free and easy as is the chat between old chums at midnight over a smoking-room fire.' Consonant with these rollicking views of art is Mr. Quilter's healthy admiration for 'the three primary colours: red, blue, and yellow.' Any one, he points out, 'can paint in good tone who paints only in black and white,' and 'the great sign of a good decorator' is 'his capability of doing without neutral tints.' Indeed, on decoration Mr. Quilter is almost eloquent. He laments most bitterly the divorce that has been made between decorative art and 'what we usually call "pictures,"' makes the customary appeal to the *Last Judgment*, and reminds us that in the great days of art Michael Angelo was the 'furnishing upholsterer.' With the present tendencies of decorative art in England Mr. Quilter, consequently, has but little sympathy, and he makes a gallant appeal to the British householder to stand no more nonsense. Let the honest fellow, he says, on his return from his counting-house tear down the Persian hangings, put a chop on the Anatolian plate, mix some toddy in the Venetian glass, and carry his wife off to the National Gallery to look at 'our own Mulready'! And then the picture he draws of the ideal

REVIEWS

home, where everything, though ugly, is hallowed by domestic memories, and where beauty appeals not to the heartless eye but the family affections; 'baby's chair there, and the mother's work-basket . . . near the fire, and the ornaments Fred brought home from India on the mantel-board'! It is really impossible not to be touched by so charming a description. How valuable, also, in connection with house decoration is *Sententia* No. 351, 'There is nothing furnishes a room like a bookcase, *and plenty of books in it.*' How cultivated the mind that thus raises literature to the position of upholstery and puts thought on a level with the antimacassar!

And, finally, for the young workers in art Mr. Quilter has loud words of encouragement. With a sympathy that is absolutely reckless of grammar, he knows from experience 'what an amount of study and mental strain *are* involved in painting a bad picture honestly'; he exhorts them (*Sententia* No. 267) to 'go on quite bravely and sincerely making mess after mess from Nature,' and while sternly warning them that there is something wrong if they do not 'feel *washed out* after each drawing,' he still urges them to 'put a new piece of goods in the window' every morning. In fact, he is quite severe on Mr. Ruskin for not recognising that 'a picture should denote the frailty of man,' and remarks with pleasing courtesy and felicitous grace that 'many phases of feeling . . . are as much a dead letter to this great art teacher, as Sanskrit to *an Islington cabman.*' Nor is Mr. Quilter one of those who fails to practice what he preaches. Far from it. He goes on quite bravely and sincerely making mess after mess from literature, and misquotes Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Alfred de Musset, Mr. Matthew

A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

Arnold, Mr. Swinburne, and Mr. Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat*, in strict accordance with *Sententia* No. 251, which tells us that 'Work must be abominable if it is ever going to be good.' Only, unfortunately, his own work never does get good. Not content with his misquotations, he misspells the names of such well-known painters as Madox-Brown, Bastien Lepage and Meissonier, hesitates between Ingrès and Ingres, talks of *Mr.* Millais and *Mr.* Linton, alludes to Mr. Frank Holl simply as 'Hall,' speaks with easy familiarity of Mr. Burne-Jones as 'Jones,' and writes of the artist whom he calls 'old Chrome' with an affection that reminds us of Mr. Tulliver's love for Jeremy Taylor. On the whole, the book will not do. We fully admit that it is extremely amusing and, no doubt, Mr. Quilter is quite earnest in his endeavours to elevate art to the dignity of manual labour, but the extraordinary vulgarity of the style alone will always be sufficient to prevent these *Sententiæ Artis* from being anything more than curiosities of literature. Mr. Quilter has missed his chance; for he has failed even to make himself the Tupper of Painting.

Sententiæ Artis: First Principles of Art for Painters and Picture Lovers. By Harry Quilter, M.A. (Isbister.)

[A reply to this review appeared on November 23.]

A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY THROUGH LITERATURE

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, December 1, 1886.)

THIS is undoubtedly an interesting book, not merely through its eloquence and earnestness, but also through the wonderful catholicity of taste that it displays. Mr. Noel has a passion for panegyric. His eulogy on Keats is

REVIEWS

closely followed by a eulogy on Whitman, and his praise of Lord Tennyson is equalled only by his praise of Mr. Robert Buchanan. Sometimes, we admit, we would like a little more fineness of discrimination, a little more delicacy of perception. Sincerity of utterance is valuable in a critic, but sanity of judgment is more valuable still, and Mr. Noel's judgments are not always distinguished by their sobriety. Many of the essays, however, are well worth reading. The best is certainly that on *The Poetic Interpretation of Nature*, in which Mr. Noel claims that what is called by Mr. Ruskin the 'pathetic fallacy of literature' is in reality a vital emotional truth; but the essays on Hugo and Mr. Browning are good also; the little paper entitled *Rambles by the Cornish Seas* is a real marvel of delightful description, and the monograph on Chatterton has a good deal of merit, though we must protest very strongly against Mr. Noel's idea that Chatterton must be modernised before he can be appreciated. Mr. Noel has absolutely no right whatsoever to alter Chatterton's 'yonge damoysselles' and 'anlace fell' into 'youthful damsels' and 'weapon fell,' for Chatterton's archaisms were an essential part of his inspiration and his method. Mr. Noel in one of his essays speaks with much severity of those who prefer sound to sense in poetry and, no doubt, this is a very wicked thing to do; but he himself is guilty of a much graver sin against art when, in his desire to emphasise the meaning of Chatterton, he destroys Chatterton's music. In the modernised version he gives of the wonderful *Songe to Ælla*, he mars by his corrections the poem's metrical beauty, ruins the rhymes and robs the music of its echo. Nineteenth-century restorations have done quite

A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

enough harm to English architecture without English poetry being treated in the same manner, and we hope that when Mr. Noel writes again about Chatterton he will quote from the poet's verse, not from a publisher's version.

This, however, is not by any means the chief blot on Mr. Noel's book. The fault of his book is that it tells us far more about his own personal feelings than it does about the qualities of the various works of art that are criticised. It is in fact a diary of the emotions suggested by literature, rather than any real addition to literary criticism, and we fancy that many of the poets about whom he writes so eloquently would be not a little surprised at the qualities he finds in their work. Byron, for instance, who spoke with such contempt of what he called 'twaddling about trees and babbling o' green fields'; Byron who cried, 'Away with this cant about nature! A good poet can imbue a pack of cards with more poetry than inhabits the forests of America,' is claimed by Mr. Noel as a true nature-worshipper and Pantheist along with Wordsworth and Shelley; and we wonder what Keats would have thought of a critic who gravely suggests that *Endymion* is 'a parable of the development of the individual soul.' There are two ways of misunderstanding a poem. One is to misunderstand it and the other to praise it for qualities that it does not possess. The latter is Mr. Noel's method, and in his anxiety to glorify the artist he often does so at the expense of the work of art.

Mr. Noel also is constantly the victim of his own eloquence. So facile is his style that it constantly betrays him into crude and extravagant statements. Rhetoric and over-emphasis are the dangers that

REVIEWS

Mr. Noel has not always succeeded in avoiding. It is extravagant, for instance, to say that all great poetry has been 'pictorial,' or that Coleridge's *Knight's Grave* is worth many *Kubla Khans*, or that Byron has 'the splendid imperfection of an Æschylus,' or that we had lately 'one dramatist living in England, and only one, who could be compared to Hugo, and that was Richard Hengist Horne,' and that 'to find an English dramatist of the same order before him we must go back to Sheridan if not to Otway.' Mr. Noel, again, has a curious habit of classing together the most incongruous names and comparing the most incongruous works of art. What is gained by telling us that 'Sardanapalus' is perhaps hardly equal to 'Sheridan,' that Lord Tennyson's ballad of *The Revenge* and his *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* are worthy of a place beside Thomson's *Rule Britannia*, that Edgar Allan Poe, Disraeli and Mr. Alfred Austin are artists of note whom we may affiliate on Byron, and that if Sappho and Milton 'had not high genius, they would be justly reproached as sensational'? And surely it is a crude judgment that classes Baudelaire, of all poets, with Marini and mediæval troubadours, and a crude style that writes of 'Goethe, Shelley, Scott, and Wilson,' for a mortal should not thus intrude upon the immortals, even though he be guilty of holding with them that *Cain* is 'one of the finest poems in the English language.' It is only fair, however, to add that Mr. Noel subsequently makes more than ample amends for having opened Parnassus to the public in this reckless manner, by calling Wilson an 'offal-feeder,' on the ground that he once wrote a severe criticism of some of Lord Tennyson's early

COMMON-SENSE IN ART

poems. For Mr. Noel does not mince his words. On the contrary, he speaks with much scorn of all euphuism and delicacy of expression and, preferring the affectation of nature to the affectation of art, he thinks nothing of calling other people 'Laura Bridgmans,' 'Jackasses' and the like. This, we think, is to be regretted, especially in a writer so cultured as Mr. Noel. For, though indignation may make a great poet, bad temper always makes a poor critic.

On the whole, Mr. Noel's book has an emotional rather than an intellectual interest. It is simply a record of the moods of a man of letters, and its criticisms merely reveal the critic without illuminating what he would criticise for us. The best that we can say of it is that it is a Sentimental Journey through Literature, the worst that any one could say of it is that it has all the merits of such an expedition.

Essays on Poetry and Poets. By the Hon. Roden Noel. (Kegan Paul.)

COMMON-SENSE IN ART

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, January 8, 1887.)

AT this critical moment in the artistic development of England Mr. John Collier has come forward as the champion of common-sense in art. It will be remembered that Mr. Quilter, in one of his most vivid and picturesque metaphors, compared Mr. Collier's method as a painter to that of a shampooer in a Turkish bath.¹ As a writer Mr. Collier is no less interesting. It is true that he is not eloquent, but then he censures with just severity 'the meaningless eloquence of the writers on æsthetics'; we admit that he is not subtle, but then he is careful to remind us that

¹ See A 'Jolly' *Art Critic*, page 112.

REVIEWS

Leonardo da Vinci's views on painting are nonsensical; his qualities are of a solid, indeed we may say of a stolid order; he is thoroughly honest, sturdy and downright, and he advises us, if we want to know anything about art, to study the works of 'Helmholtz, Stokes, or Tyndall,' to which we hope we may be allowed to add Mr. Collier's own *Manual of Oil Painting*.

For this art of painting is a very simple thing indeed, according to Mr. Collier. It consists merely in the 'representation of natural objects by means of pigments on a flat surface.' There is nothing, he tells us, 'so very mysterious' in it after all. 'Every natural object appears to us as a sort of pattern of different shades and colours,' and 'the task of the artist is so to arrange his shades and colours on his canvas that a similar pattern is produced.' This is obviously pure common-sense, and it is clear that art-definitions of this character can be comprehended by the very meanest capacity and, indeed, may be said to appeal to it. For the perfect development, however, of this pattern-producing faculty a severe training is necessary. The art student must begin by painting china, crockery, and 'still life' generally. He should rule his straight lines and employ actual measurements wherever it is possible. He will also find that a plumb-line comes in very useful. Then he should proceed to Greek sculpture, for from pottery to Phidias is only one step. Ultimately he will arrive at the living model, and as soon as he can 'faithfully represent any object that he has before him' he is a painter. After this there is, of course, only one thing to be considered, the important question of subject. Subjects, Mr. Collier tells us, are of two kinds, ancient and modern. Modern

COMMON-SENSE IN ART

subjects are more healthy than ancient subjects, but the real difficulty of modernity in art is that the artist passes his life with respectable people, and that respectable people are unpictorial. 'For picturesqueness,' consequently, he should go to 'the rural poor,' and for pathos to the London slums. Ancient subjects offer the artist a very much wider field. If he is fond of 'rich stuffs and costly accessories' he should study the Middle Ages; if he wishes to paint beautiful people, 'untrammelled by any considerations of historical accuracy,' he should turn to the Greek and Roman mythology; and if he is a 'mediocre painter,' he should choose his 'subject from the Old and New Testament,' a recommendation, by the way, that many of our Royal Academicians seem already to have carried out.

To paint a real historical picture one requires the assistance of a theatrical costumier and a photographer. From the former one hires the dresses and the latter supplies one with the true background. Besides subject-pictures there are also portraits and landscapes. Portrait painting, Mr. Collier tells us, 'makes no demands on the imagination.' As is the sitter, so is the work of art. If the sitter be commonplace, for instance, it would be 'contrary to the fundamental principles of portraiture to make the picture other than commonplace.' There are, however, certain rules that should be followed. One of the most important of these is that the artist should always consult his sitter's relations before he begins the picture. If they want a profile he must do them a profile; if they require a full face he must give them a full face; and he should be careful also to get their opinion as to the costume the sitter should wear and 'the sort of expression he should put on.'

REVIEWS

‘After all,’ says Mr. Collier pathetically, ‘it is they who have to live with the picture.’

Besides the difficulty of pleasing the victim’s family, however, there is the difficulty of pleasing the victim. According to Mr. Collier, and he is, of course, a high authority on the matter, portrait painters bore their sitters very much. The true artist consequently should encourage his sitter to converse, or get some one to read to him; for if the sitter is bored the portrait will look sad. Still, if the sitter has not got an amiable expression naturally the artist is not bound to give him one, nor ‘if he is essentially ungraceful’ should the artist ever ‘put him in a graceful attitude.’ As regards landscape painting, Mr. Collier tells us that ‘a great deal of nonsense has been talked about the impossibility of reproducing nature,’ but that there is nothing really to prevent a picture giving to the eye exactly the same impression that an actual scene gives, for that when he visited ‘the celebrated panorama of the Siege of Paris’ he could hardly distinguish the painted from the real cannons! The whole passage is extremely interesting, and is really one out of many examples we might give of the swift and simple manner in which the common-sense method solves the great problems of art. The book concludes with a detailed exposition of the undulatory theory of light according to the most ancient scientific discoveries. Mr. Collier points out how important it is for an artist to hold sound views on the subject of ether waves, and his own thorough appreciation of Science may be estimated by the definition he gives of it as being ‘neither more nor less than knowledge.’

Mr. Collier has done his work with much industry and earnestness. Indeed, nothing but the most

MINER AND MINOR POETS

conscientious seriousness, combined with real labour, could have produced such a book, and the exact value of common-sense in art has never before been so clearly demonstrated.

A Manual of Oil Painting. By the Hon. John Collier. (Cassell and Co.)

MINER AND MINOR POETS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 1, 1887.)

THE conditions that precede artistic production are so constantly treated as qualities of the work of art itself that one sometimes is tempted to wish that all art were anonymous. Yet there are certain forms of art so individual in their utterance, so purely personal in their expression, that for a full appreciation of their style and manner some knowledge of the artist's life is necessary. To this class belongs Mr. Skipsey's *Carols from the Coal-Fields*, a volume of intense human interest and high literary merit, and we are consequently glad to see that Dr. Spence Watson has added a short biography of his friend to his friend's poems, for the life and the literature are too indissolubly wedded ever really to be separated. Joseph Skipsey, Dr. Watson tells us, was sent into the coal pits at Percy Main, near North Shields, when he was seven years of age. Young as he was he had to work from twelve to sixteen hours in the day, generally in the pitch dark, and in the dreary winter months he saw the sun only upon Sundays. When he went to work he had learned the alphabet and to put words of two letters together, but he was really his own schoolmaster, and 'taught himself to write, for example, by copying the letters from printed bills or notices, when he

REVIEWS

could get a candle end,—his paper being the trap-door, which it was his duty to open and shut as the wagons passed through, and his pen a piece of chalk.' The first book he really read was the Bible, and not content with reading it, he learned by heart the chapters which specially pleased him. When sixteen years old he was presented with a copy of Lindley Murray's Grammar, by the aid of which he gained some knowledge of the structural rules of English. He had already become acquainted with *Paradise Lost*, and was another proof of Matthew Prior's axiom, 'Who often reads will sometimes want to write,' for he had begun to write verse when only 'a bonnie pit lad.' For more than forty years of his life he laboured in 'the coal-dark underground,' and is now the caretaker of a Board-school in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. As for the qualities of his poetry, they are its directness and its natural grace. He has an intellectual as well as a metrical affinity with Blake, and possesses something of Blake's marvellous power of making simple things seem strange to us, and strange things seem simple. How delightful, for instance, is this little poem :

'Get up !' the caller calls, 'Get up !'
 And in the dead of night,
 To win the bairns their bite and sup,
 I rise a weary wight.
 My flannel dudden donn'd, thrice o'er
 My birds are kiss'd, and then
 I with a whistle shut the door
 I may not ope again.

How exquisite and fanciful this stray lyric :

The wind comes from the west to-night ;
 So sweetly down the lane he bloweth
 Upon my lips, with pure delight
 From head to foot my body gloweth

MINER AND MINOR POETS

Where did the wind, the magic find
To charm me thus? say, heart that knoweth!
'Within a rose on which he blows
Before upon thy lips he bloweth!'

We admit that Mr. Skipsey's work is extremely unequal, but when it is at its best it is full of sweetness and strength; and though he has carefully studied the artistic capabilities of language, he never makes his form formal by over-polishing. Beauty with him seems to be an unconscious result rather than a conscious aim; his style has all the delicate charm of chance. We have already pointed out his affinity to Blake, but with Burns also he may be said to have a spiritual kinship, and in the songs of the Northumbrian miner we meet with something of the Ayrshire peasant's wild gaiety and mad humour. He gives himself up freely to his impressions, and there is a fine, careless rapture in his laughter. The whole book deserves to be read, and much of it deserves to be loved. Mr. Skipsey can find music for every mood, whether he is dealing with the real experiences of the pitman or with the imaginative experiences of the poet, and his verse has a rich vitality about it. In these latter days of shallow rhymes it is pleasant to come across some one to whom poetry is a passion not a profession.

Mr. F. B. Doveton belongs to a different school. In his amazing versatility he reminds us of the gentleman who wrote the immortal handbills for Mrs. Jarley, for his subjects range from Dr. Carter Moffatt and the Ammoniaphone to Mr. Whiteley, Lady Bicyclists, and the Immortality of the Soul. His verses in praise of Zoedone are a fine example of didactic poetry, his elegy on the death of Jumbo

REVIEWS

is quite up to the level of the subject, and the stanzas on a watering-place,

Who of its merits can e'er think meanly?
Scattering ozone to all the land!

are well worthy of a place in any shilling guide-book. Mr. Doveton divides his poems into grave and gay, but we like him least when he is amusing, for in his merriment there is but little melody, and he makes his muse grin through a horse-collar. When he is serious he is much better, and his descriptive poems show that he has completely mastered the most approved poetical phraseology. Our old friend Boreas is as 'burly' as ever, 'zephyrs' are consistently 'amorous,' and 'the welkin rings' upon the smallest provocation; birds are 'the feathered host' or 'the sylvan throng,' the wind 'wantons o'er the lea,' 'vernal gales' murmur to 'crystal rills,' and Lemprière's Dictionary supplies the Latin names for the sun and the moon. Armed with these daring and novel expressions Mr. Doveton indulges in fierce moods of nature-worship, and botanises recklessly through the provinces. Now and then, however, we come across some pleasing passages. Mr. Doveton apparently is an enthusiastic fisherman, and sings merrily of the 'enchancing grayling' and the 'crimson and gold trout' that rise to the crafty angler's 'feathered wile.' Still, we fear that he will never produce any real good work till he has made up his mind whether destiny intends him for a poet or for an advertising agent, and we venture to hope that should he ever publish another volume he will find some other rhyme to 'vision' than 'Elysian,' a dissonance that occurs five times in this well-meaning but tedious volume.

MINER AND MINOR POETS

As for Mr. Ashby-Sterry, those who object to the nude in art should at once read his lays of *The Lazy Minstrel* and be converted, for over these poems the milliner, not the muse, presides, and the result is a little alarming. As the Chelsea sage investigated the philosophy of clothes, so Mr. Ashby-Sterry has set himself to discover the poetry of petticoats, and seems to find much consolation in the thought that, though art is long, skirts are worn short. He is the only pedlar who has climbed Parnassus since Autolycus sang of

Lawn as white as driven snow,
Cypress black as e'er was crow,

and his details are as amazing as his diminutives. He is capable of penning a canto to a crinoline, and has a pathetic monody on a mackintosh. He sings of pretty puckers and pliant pleats, and is eloquent on frills, frocks and chemisettes. The latest French fashions stir him to a fine frenzy, and the sight of a pair of Balmoral boots thrills him with absolute ecstasy. He writes rondels on ribbons, lyrics on linen and lace, and his most ambitious ode is addressed to a Tomboy in Trouserettes! Yet his verse is often dainty and delicate, and many of his poems are full of sweet and pretty conceits. Indeed, of the Thames at summer time he writes so charmingly, and with such felicitous grace of epithet, that we cannot but regret that he has chosen to make himself the Poet of Petticoats and the Troubadour of Trouserettes.

(1) *Carols from the Coal-Fields, and Other Songs and Ballads.* By Joseph Skipsey. (Walter Scott.)

(2) *Sketches in Prose and Verse.* By F. B. Doveton. (Sampson Low, Marston and Co.)

(3) *The Lazy Minstrel.* By J. Ashby-Sterry. (Fisher Unwin.)

REVIEWS

A NEW CALENDAR

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 17, 1887.)

MOST modern calendars mar the sweet simplicity of our lives by reminding us that each day that passes is the anniversary of some perfectly uninteresting event. Their compilers display a degraded passion for chronicling small beer, and rake out the dust-heap of history in an ardent search after rubbish. Mr. Walter Scott, however, has made a new departure and has published a calendar in which every day of the year is made beautiful for us by means of an elegant extract from the poems of Mr. Alfred Austin. This, undoubtedly, is a step in the right direction. It is true that such aphorisms as

Graves are a mother's dimples
When we complain,

or

The primrose wears a constant smile,
And captive takes the heart,

can hardly be said to belong to the very highest order of poetry, still, they are preferable, on the whole, to the date of Hannah More's birth, or of the burning down of Exeter Change, or of the opening of the Great Exhibition; and though it would be dangerous to make calendars the basis of Culture, we should all be much improved if we began each day with a fine passage of English poetry. How far this desirable result can be attained by a use of the volume now before us is, perhaps, open to question, but it must be admitted that its anonymous compiler has done his work very conscientiously, nor will we quarrel with him for the fact that he constantly repeats the same

A NEW CALENDAR

quotation twice over. No doubt it was difficult to find in Mr. Austin's work three hundred and sixty-five different passages really worthy of insertion in an almanac, and, besides, our climate has so degenerated of late that there is no reason at all why a motto perfectly suitable for February should not be equally appropriate when August has set in with its usual severity. For the misprints there is less excuse. Even the most uninteresting poet cannot survive bad editing.

Prefixed to the Calendar is an introductory note from the pen of Mr. William Sharp, written in that involved and affected style which is Mr. Sharp's distinguishing characteristic, and displaying that intimate acquaintance with Sappho's lost poems which is the privilege only of those who are not acquainted with Greek literature. As a criticism it is not of much value, but as an advertisement it is quite excellent. Indeed, Mr. Sharp hints mysteriously at secret political influence, and tells us that though Mr. Austin 'sings with Tityrus' yet he 'has conversed with Æneas,' which, we suppose, is a euphemistic method of alluding to the fact that Mr. Austin once lunched with Lord Beaconsfield. It is for the poet, however, not for the politician, that Mr. Sharp reserves his loftiest panegyric and, in his anxiety to smuggle the author of *Leszko the Bastard* and *Grandmother's Teaching* into the charmed circle of the Immortals, he leaves no adjective unturned, quoting and misquoting Mr. Austin with a recklessness that is absolutely fatal to the cause he pleads. For mediocre critics are usually safe in their generalities; it is in their reasons and examples that they come so lamentably to grief. When, for instance, Mr. Sharp tells us

REVIEWS

that lines with the 'natural magic' of Shakespeare, Keats and Coleridge are 'far from infrequent' in Mr. Austin's poems, all that we can say is that we have never come across any lines of the kind in Mr. Austin's published works, but it is difficult to help smiling when Mr. Sharp gravely calls upon us to note 'the illuminative significance' of such a commonplace verse as

My manhood keeps the dew of morn,
And what have I to give;
Being right glad that I was born,
And thankful that I live.

Nor do Mr. Sharp's constant misquotations really help him out of his difficulties. Such a line as

A meadow ribbed with *drying* swathes of hay,

has at least the merit of being a simple, straightforward description of an ordinary scene in an English landscape, but not much can be said in favour of

A meadow ribbed with *dying* swathes of hay,

which is Mr. Sharp's own version, and one that he finds 'delightfully suggestive.' It is indeed suggestive, but only of that want of care that comes from want of taste.

On the whole, Mr. Sharp has attempted an impossible task. Mr. Austin is neither an Olympian nor a Titan, and all the puffing in Paternoster Row cannot set him on Parnassus.

His verse is devoid of all real rhythmical life; it may have the metre of poetry, but it has not often got its music, nor can there be any true delicacy in the ear that tolerates such rhymes as 'chord' and 'abroad.' Even the claim that Mr. Sharp puts forward for him, that his muse takes her impressions directly from nature and owes nothing to books, can-

THE POETS' CORNER

not be sustained for a moment. Wordsworth is a great poet, but bad echoes of Wordsworth are extremely depressing, and when Mr. Austin calls the cuckoo a

Voyaging voice

and tells us that

The stockdove broods

Low to itself,

we must really enter a protest against such silly plagiarisms.

Perhaps, however, we are treating Mr. Sharp too seriously. He admits himself that it was at the special request of the compiler of the Calendar that he wrote the preface at all, and though he courteously adds that the task is agreeable to him, still he shows only too clearly that he considers it a task and, like a clever lawyer or a popular clergyman, tries to atone for his lack of sincerity by a pleasing over-emphasis. Nor is there any reason why this Calendar should not be a great success. If published as a broad-sheet, with a picture of Mr. Austin 'conversing with Æneas,' it might gladden many a simple cottage home and prove a source of innocent amusement to the Conservative working-man.

Days of the Year: A Poetic Calendar from the Works of Alfred Austin. Selected and edited by A. S. With Introduction by William Sharp. (Walter Scott.)

THE POETS' CORNER

II

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 8, 1887.)

A LITTLE schoolboy was once asked to explain the difference between prose and poetry. After some consideration he replied, "blue violets" is prose, and "violets blue" is poetry.' The

REVIEWS

distinction, we admit, is not exhaustive, but it seems to be the one that is extremely popular with our minor poets. Opening at random *The Queen's Innocent* we come across passages like this :

Full gladly would I sit
Of such a potent magus at the feet,

and this :

The third, while yet a youth,
Espoused a lady noble but not royal,
One only son who gave him—Pharamond—

lines that, apparently, rest their claim to be regarded as poetry on their unnecessary and awkward inversions. Yet this poem is not without beauty, and the character of Nardi, the little prince who is treated as the Court fool, shows a delicate grace of fancy, and is both tender and true. The most delightful thing in the whole volume is a little lyric called *April*, which is like a picture set to music.

The Chimneypiece of Bruges is a narrative poem in blank verse, and tells us of a young artist who, having been unjustly convicted of his wife's murder, spends his life in carving on the great chimneypiece of the prison the whole story of his love and suffering. The poem is full of colour, but the blank verse is somewhat heavy in movement. There are some pretty things in the book, and a poet without hysterics is rare.

Dr. Dawson Burns's *Oliver Cromwell* is a pleasant panegyric on the Protector, and reads like a prize poem by a nice sixth-form boy. The verses on *The Good Old Times* should be sent as a leaflet to all Tories of Mr. Chaplin's school, and the lines on Bunker's Hill, beginning,

I stand on Bunker's towering pile,
are sure to be popular in America.

THE POETS' CORNER

K. E. V.'s little volume is a series of poems on the Saints. Each poem is preceded by a brief biography of the Saint it celebrates—which is a very necessary precaution, as few of them ever existed. It does not display much poetic power, and such lines as these on St. Stephen,—

Did ever man before so fall asleep?
A cruel shower of stones his only bed,
For lullaby the curses loud and deep,
His covering with blood red—

may be said to add another horror to martyrdom. Still it is a thoroughly well-intentioned book and eminently suitable for invalids.

Mr. Foskett's poems are very serious and deliberate. One of the best of them, *Harold Glynde*, is a Cantata for Total Abstainers, and has already been set to music. *A Hindoo Tragedy* is the story of an enthusiastic Brahmin reformer who tries to break down the prohibition against widows marrying, and there are other interesting tales. Mr. Foskett has apparently forgotten to insert the rhymes in his sonnet to Wordsworth; but, as he tells us elsewhere that 'Poesy is uninspired by Art,' perhaps he is only heralding a new and formless form. He is always sincere in his feelings, and his apostrophe to Canon Farrar is equalled only by his apostrophe to Shakespeare.

The Pilgrimage of Memory suffers a good deal by being printed as poetry, and Mr. Barker should republish it at once as a prose work. Take, for instance, this description of a lady on a runaway horse:—

Her screams alarmed the Squire, who seeing the peril of his daughter, rode frantic after her. I saw at once the danger, and stepping from the footpath, show'd myself before the startled animal, which forthwith slackened pace, and darting up adroitly, I seized the rein, and in another moment, had released

REVIEWS

the maiden's foot, and held her, all insensible, within my arms. Poor girl, her head and face were sorely bruised, and I tried hard to staunch the blood which flowed from many a scalp-wound, and wipe away the dust that disfigured her lovely features. In another moment the Squire was by my side. 'Poor child,' he cried, alarmed, 'is she dead?' 'No, sir; not dead, I think,' said I, 'but sorely bruised and injured.'

There is clearly nothing to be gained by dividing the sentences of this simple and straightforward narrative into lines of unequal length, and Mr. Barker's own arrangement of the metre,

In another moment,
The Squire was by my side.
'Poor child,' he cried, alarmed, 'is she dead?'
'No, sir; not dead, I think,' said I,
'But sorely bruised and injured,'

seems to us to be quite inferior to ours. We beg that the second edition of *The Pilgrimage of Memory* may be issued as a novel in prose.

Mr. Gladstone Turner believes that we are on the verge of a great social cataclysm, and warns us that our *cradles* are even now being rocked by *slumbering volcanoes*! We hope that there is no truth in this statement, and that it is merely a startling metaphor introduced for the sake of effect, for elsewhere in the volume there is a great deal of beauty which we should be sorry to think was doomed to immediate extinction. *The Choice*, for instance, is a charming poem, and the sonnet on *Evening* would be almost perfect if it were not for an unpleasant assonance in the fifth line. Indeed, so good is much of Mr. Gladstone Turner's work that we trust he will give up rhyming 'real' to 'steal' and 'feel,' as such bad habits are apt to grow on careless poets and to blunt their ear for music.

Nivalis is a five-act tragedy in blank verse. Most

GREAT WRITERS BY LITTLE MEN

plays that are written to be read, not to be acted, miss that condensation and directness of expression which is one of the secrets of true dramatic diction, and Mr. Schwartz's tragedy is consequently somewhat verbose. Still, it is full of fine lines and noble scenes. It is essentially a work of art, and though, as far as language is concerned, the personages all speak through the lips of the poet, yet in passion and purpose their characters are clearly differentiated, and the Queen Nivalis and her lover Giulio are drawn with real psychological power. We hope that some day Mr. Schwartz will write a play for the stage, as he has the dramatic instinct and the dramatic imagination, and can make life pass into literature without robbing it of its reality.

(1) *The Queen's Innocent, with Other Poems.* By Elise Cooper. (David Stott.)

(2) *The Chimney-piece of Bruges and Other Poems.* By Constance E. Dixon. (Elliot Stock.)

(3) *Oliver Cromwell and Other Poems.* By Dawson Burns, D.D. (Partridge and Co.)

(4) *The Circle of Saints.* By K. E. V. (Swan Sonnenschein and Co.)

(5) *Poems.* By Edward Foskett. (Kegan Paul.)

(6) *The Pilgrimage of Memory.* By John Thomas Barker. (Simpkin, Marshall and Co.)

(7) *Errata.* By G. Gladstone Turner. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

(8) *Nivalis.* By J. M. W. Schwartz. (Kegan Paul.)

GREAT WRITERS BY LITTLE MEN

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 28, 1887.)

IN an introductory note prefixed to the initial volume of 'Great Writers,' a series of literary monographs now being issued by Mr. Walter Scott, the publisher himself comes forward in the kindest manner possible to give his authors the

REVIEWS

requisite 'puff preliminary,' and ventures to express the modest opinion that such original and valuable works 'have never before been produced in any part of the world at a price so low as a shilling a volume.' Far be it from us to make any heartless allusion to the fact that Shakespeare's *Sonnets* were brought out at fivepence, or that for fourpence-halfpenny one could have bought a Martial in ancient Rome. Every man, a cynical American tells us, has the right to beat a drum before his booth. Still, we must acknowledge that Mr. Walter Scott would have been much better employed in correcting some of the more obvious errors that appear in his series. When, for instance, we come across such a phrase as 'the brotherly liberality of the brothers *Wedge-wood*,' the awkwardness of the expression is hardly atoned for by the fact that the name of the great potter is misspelt; Longfellow is so essentially poor in rhymes that it is unfair to rob him even of one, and the misquotation on page 77 is absolutely unkind; the joke Coleridge himself made upon the subject should have been sufficient to remind any one that 'Comberbach' (*sic*) was not the name under which he enlisted, and no real beauty is added to the first line of his pathetic *Work Without Hope* by printing 'lare' (*sic*) instead of 'lair.' The truth is that all premature panegyrics bring their own punishment upon themselves and, in the present case, though the series has only just entered upon existence, already a great deal of the work done is careless, disappointing, unequal and tedious.

Mr. Eric Robertson's *Longfellow* is a most depressing book. No one survives being over-estimated, nor is there any surer way of destroying an author's reputation than to glorify him without judgment

GREAT WRITERS BY LITTLE MEN

and to praise him without tact. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was one of the first true men of letters America produced, and as such deserves a high place in any history of American civilisation. To a land out of breath in its greed for gain he showed the example of a life devoted entirely to the study of literature; his lectures, though not by any means brilliant, were still productive of much good; he had a most charming and gracious personality, and he wrote some pretty poems. But his poems are not of the kind that call for intellectual analysis or for elaborate description or, indeed, for any serious discussion at all. They are as unsuited for panegyric as they are unworthy of censure, and it is difficult to help smiling when Mr. Robertson gravely tells us that few modern poets have given utterance to a faith so comprehensive as that expressed in the *Psalm of Life*, or that *Evangeline* should confer on Longfellow the title of 'Golden-mouthed,' and that the style of metre adopted 'carries the ear back to times in the world's history when grand simplicities were sung.' Surely Mr. Robertson does not believe that there is any connection at all between Longfellow's unrhymed dactyls and the hexameter of Greece and Rome, or that any one reading *Evangeline* would be reminded of Homer's or Virgil's line? Where also lies the advantage of confusing popularity with poetic power? Though the *Psalm of Life* be shouted from Maine to California, that would not make it true poetry. Why call upon us to admire a bad misquotation from the *Midnight Mass for the Dying Year*, and why talk of Longfellow's 'hundreds of imitators'? Longfellow has no imitators, for of echoes themselves there are no echoes and it is only style that makes a school.

REVIEWS

Now and then, however, Mr. Robertson considers it necessary to assume a critical attitude. He tells us, for instance, that whether or not Longfellow was a genius of the first order, it must be admitted that he loved social pleasures and was a good eater and judge of wines, admiring 'Bass's ale' more than anything else he had seen in England! The remarks on *Excelsior* are even still more amazing. *Excelsior*, says Mr. Robertson, is not a ballad because a ballad deals either with real or with supernatural people, and the hero of the poem cannot be brought under either category. For, 'were he of human flesh, his madcap notion of scaling a mountain with the purpose of getting to the sky would be simply drivelling lunacy,' to say nothing of the fact that the peak in question is much frequented by tourists, while, on the other hand, 'it would be absurd to suppose him a spirit . . . for no spirit would be so silly as climb a snowy mountain for nothing'! It is really painful to have to read such preposterous nonsense, and if Mr. Walter Scott imagines that work of this kind is 'original and valuable' he has much to learn. Nor are Mr. Robertson's criticisms upon other poets at all more felicitous. The casual allusion to Herrick's 'confectioneries of verse' is, of course, quite explicable, coming as it does from an editor who excluded Herrick from an anthology of the child-poems of our literature in favour of Mr. Ashby-Sterry and Mr. William Sharp, but when Mr. Robertson tells us that Poe's 'loftiest flights of imagination in verse . . . rise into no more empyreal realm than the *fantastic*,' we can only recommend him to read as soon as possible the marvellous lines *To Helen*, a poem as beautiful as a Greek gem and as musical as Apollo's lute. The remarks, too, on Poe's critical

GREAT WRITERS BY LITTLE MEN

estimate of his own work show that Mr. Robertson has never really studied the poet on whom he pronounces such glib and shallow judgments, and exemplify very clearly the fact that even dogmatism is no excuse for ignorance.

After reading Mr. Hall Caine's *Coleridge* we are irresistibly reminded of what Wordsworth once said about a bust that had been done of himself. After contemplating it for some time, he remarked, 'It is not a bad Wordsworth, but it is not the real Wordsworth; it is not Wordsworth the poet, it is the sort of Wordsworth who might be Chancellor of the Exchequer.' Mr. Caine's *Coleridge* is certainly not the sort of *Coleridge* who might have been Chancellor of the Exchequer, for the author of *Christabel* was not by any means remarkable as a financier; but, for all that, it is not the real *Coleridge*, it is not *Coleridge* the poet. The incidents of the life are duly recounted; the gunpowder plot at Cambridge, the egg-hot and oronokoo at the little tavern in Newgate Street, the blue coat and white waistcoat that so amazed the worthy Unitarians, and the terrible smoking experiment at Birmingham are all carefully chronicled, as no doubt they should be in every popular biography; but of the spiritual progress of the man's soul we hear absolutely nothing. Never for one single instant are we brought near to *Coleridge*; the magic of that wonderful personality is hidden from us by a cloud of mean details, an unholy jungle of facts, and the 'critical history' promised to us by Mr. Walter Scott in his unfortunate preface is conspicuous only by its absence.

Carlyle once proposed in jest to write a life of Michael Angelo without making any reference to his art, and Mr. Caine has shown that such a project

REVIEWS

is perfectly feasible. He has written the life of a great peripatetic philosopher and chronicled only the peripatetics. He has tried to tell us about a poet, and his book might be the biography of the famous tallow-chandler who would not appreciate the *Watchman*. The real events of Coleridge's life are not his gig excursions and his walking tours; they are his thoughts, dreams and passions, his moments of creative impulse, their source and secret, his moods of imaginative joy, their marvel and their meaning, and not his moods merely but the music and the melancholy that they brought him; the lyric loveliness of his voice when he sang, the sterile sorrow of the years when he was silent. It is said that every man's life is a Soul's Tragedy. Coleridge's certainly was so, and though we may not be able to pluck out the heart of his mystery, still let us recognise that mystery is there; and that the goings-out and comings-in of a man, his places of sojourn and his roads of travel are but idle things to chronicle, if that which is the man be left unrecorded. So mediocre is Mr. Caine's book that even accuracy could not make it better.

On the whole, then, Mr. Walter Scott cannot be congratulated on the success of his venture so far. The one really admirable feature of the series is the bibliography that is appended to each volume. These bibliographies are compiled by Mr. Anderson, of the British Museum, and are so valuable to the student, as well as interesting in themselves, that it is much to be regretted that they should be accompanied by such tedious letterpress.

(1) *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*. By Eric S. Robertson.

(2) *Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. By Hall Caine. 'Great Writers' Series. (Walter Scott.)

A NEW BOOK ON DICKENS

A NEW BOOK ON DICKENS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 31, 1887.)

MR. MARZIALS' *Dickens* is a great improvement on the *Longfellow* and *Cole-ridge* of his predecessors. It is certainly a little sad to find our old friend the manager of the Theatre Royal, Portsmouth, appearing as 'Mr. Vincent Crumules' (*sic*), but such misprints are not by any means uncommon in Mr. Walter Scott's publications, and, on the whole, this is a very pleasant book indeed. It is brightly and cleverly written, admirably constructed, and gives a most vivid and graphic picture of that strange modern drama, the drama of Dickens's life. The earlier chapters are quite excellent, and, though the story of the famous novelist's boyhood has been often told before, Mr. Marzials shows that it can be told again without losing any of the charm of its interest, while the account of Dickens in the plenitude of his glory is most appreciative and genial. We are really brought close to the man with his indomitable energy, his extraordinary capacity for work, his high spirits, his fascinating, tyrannous personality. The description of his method of reading is admirable, and the amazing stump-campaign in America attains, in Mr. Marzials' hands, to the dignity of a mock-heroic poem. One side of Dickens's character, however, is left almost entirely untouched, and yet it is one in every way deserving of close study. That Dickens should have felt bitterly towards his father and mother is quite explicable, but that, while feeling so bitterly, he should have caricatured them for the amusement of the public, with an evident delight in his own humour, has always seemed to us a most

REVIEWS

curious psychological problem. We are far from complaining that he did so. Good novelists are much rarer than good sons, and none of us would part readily with Micawber and Mrs. Nickleby. Still, the fact remains that a man who was affectionate and loving to his children, generous and warm-hearted to his friends, and whose books are the very bacchanalia of benevolence, pilloried his parents to make the groundlings laugh, and this fact every biographer of Dickens should face and, if possible, explain.

As for Mr. Marzials' critical estimate of Dickens as a writer, he tells us quite frankly that he believes that Dickens at his best was 'one of the greatest masters of pathos who ever lived,' a remark that seems to us an excellent example of what novelists call 'the fine courage of despair.' Of course, no biographer of Dickens could say anything else, just at present. A popular series is bound to express popular views, and cheap criticisms may be excused in cheap books. Besides, it is always open to every one to accept G. H. Lewes's unfortunate maxim that any author who makes one cry possesses the gift of pathos and, indeed, there is something very flattering in being told that one's own emotions are the ultimate test of literature. When Mr. Marzials discusses Dickens's power of drawing human nature we are upon somewhat safer ground, and we cannot but admire the cleverness with which he passes over his hero's innumerable failures. For, in some respects, Dickens might be likened to those old sculptors of our Gothic cathedrals who could give form to the most fantastic fancy, and crowd with grotesque monsters a curious world of dreams, but saw little of the grace and dignity of the men and women among

A NEW BOOK ON DICKENS

whom they lived, and whose art, lacking sanity, was therefore incomplete. Yet they at least knew the limitations of their art, while Dickens never knew the limitations of his. When he tries to be serious he succeeds only in being dull, when he aims at truth he reaches merely platitude. Shakespeare could place Ferdinand and Miranda by the side of Caliban, and Life recognises them all as her own, but Dickens's Mirandas are the young ladies out of a fashion-book, and his Ferdinands the walking gentlemen of an unsuccessful company of third-rate players. So little sanity, indeed, had Dickens's art that he was never able even to satirise: he could only caricature; and so little does Mr. Marzials realise where Dickens's true strength and weakness lie, that he actually complains that Cruikshank's illustrations are too much exaggerated and that he could never draw either a lady or a gentleman.

The latter was hardly a disqualification for illustrating Dickens as few such characters occur in his books, unless we are to regard Lord Frederick Verisopht and Sir Mulberry Hawk as valuable studies of high life; and, for our own part, we have always considered that the greatest injustice ever done to Dickens has been done by those who have tried to illustrate him seriously.

In conclusion, Mr. Marzials expresses his belief that a century hence Dickens will be read as much as we now read Scott, and says rather prettily that as long as he is read 'there will be one gentle and humanising influence the more at work among men,' which is always a useful tag to append to the life of any popular author. Remembering that of all forms of error prophecy is the most gratuitous, we will not take upon ourselves to decide the question of

REVIEWS

Dickens's immortality. If our descendants do not read him they will miss a great source of amusement, and if they do, we hope they will not model their style upon his. Of this, however, there is but little danger, for no age ever borrows the slang of its predecessor. As for 'the gentle and humanising influence,' this is taking Dickens just a little too seriously.

Life of Charles Dickens. By Frank T. Marzials. 'Great Writers' Series. (Walter Scott.)

OUR BOOK-SHELF

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 12, 1887.)

THE MASTER OF TANAGRA is certainly one of Ernst von Wildenbruch's most delightful productions. It presents an exceedingly pretty picture of the bright external side of ancient Greek life, and tells how a handsome young Tanagrian left his home for the sake of art, and returned to it for love's sake—an old story, no doubt, but one which gains a new charm from its new setting. The historical characters of the book, such as Praxiteles and Phryne, seem somehow less real than those that are purely imaginary, but this is usually the case in all novels that would recreate the past for us, and is a form of penalty that Romance has often to pay when she tries to blend fact with fancy, and to turn the great personages of history into puppets for a little play. The translation, which is from the pen of the Baroness von Lauer, reads very pleasantly, and some of the illustrations are good, though it is impossible to reproduce by any process the delicate and exquisite charm of the Tanagra figurines.

OUR BOOK-SHELF

M. Paul Stapfer in his book *Molière et Shakespeare* shows very clearly that the French have not yet forgiven Schlegel for having threatened that, as a reprisal for the atrocities committed by Napoleon, he would prove that Molière was no poet. Indeed, M. Stapfer, while admitting that one should be fair 'envers tout le monde, même envers les Allemands,' charges down upon the German critics with the brilliancy and dash of a French cuirassier, and mocks at them for their dulness, at the very moment that he is annexing their erudition, an achievement for which the French genius is justly renowned. As for the relative merits of Molière and Shakespeare, M. Stapfer has no hesitation in placing the author of *Le Misanthrope* by the side of the author of *Hamlet*. Shakespeare's comedies seem to him somewhat wilful and fantastic; he prefers Orgon and Tartuffe to Oberon and Titania, and can hardly forgive Beatrice for having been 'born to speak all mirth, and no matter.'

Perhaps he hardly realises that it is as a poet, not as a playwright, that we love Shakespeare in England, and that Ariel singing by the yellow sands, or fairies hiding in a wood near Athens, may be as real as Alceste in his wooing of Célimène, and as true as Harpagon weeping for his money-box; still, his book is full of interesting suggestion, many of his remarks on literature are quite excellent, and his style has the qualities of grace, distinction, and ease of movement.

Not so much can be said for *Annals of the Life of Shakespeare*, which is a dull though well-meaning little book. What we do not know about Shakespeare is a most fascinating subject, and one that would fill a volume, but what we do know about

REVIEWS

him is so meagre and inadequate that when it is collected together the result is rather depressing. However, there are many people, no doubt, who find a great source of interest in the fact that the author of *The Merchant of Venice* once brought an action for the sum of £1, 15s. 10d. and gained his suit, and for these this volume will have considerable charm. It is a pity that the finest line Ben Jonson ever wrote about Shakespeare should be misquoted at the very beginning of the book, and the illustration of Shakespeare's monument gives the inscription very badly indeed. Also, it was Ben Jonson's stepfather, not his 'father-in-law,' as stated, who was the bricklayer; but it is quite useless to dwell upon these things, as nobody nowadays seems to have any time either to correct proofs or to consult authorities.

One of the most pleasing volumes that has appeared as yet in the Canterbury Series is the collection of Allan Ramsay's poems. Ramsay, whose profession was the making of periwigs, and whose pleasure was the making of poetry, is always delightful reading, except when he tries to write English and to imitate Pope. His *Gentle Shepherd* is a charming pastoral play, full of humour and romance; his *Vision* has a good deal of natural fire; and some of his songs, such as *The Yellow-hair'd Laddie* and *The Lass of Patie's Mill*, might rank beside those of Burns. The preface to this attractive little edition is from the pen of Mr. J. Logie Robertson, and the simple, straightforward style in which it is written contrasts favourably with the silly pompous manner affected by so many of the other editors of the series.

Ramsay's life is worth telling well, and Mr.

OUR BOOK-SHELF

Robertson tells it well, and gives us a really capital picture of Edinburgh society in the early half of the last century.

Dante for Beginners, by Miss Arabella Shore, is a sort of literary guide-book. What Virgil was to the great Florentine, Miss Shore would be to the British public, and her modest little volume can do no possible harm to Dante, which is more than one can say of many commentaries on the *Divine Comedy*.

Miss Phillimore's *Studies in Italian Literature* is a much more elaborate work, and displays a good deal of erudition. Indeed, the erudition is sometimes displayed a little too much, and we should like to see the lead of learning transmuted more often into the gold of thought. The essays on Petrarch and Tasso are tedious, but those on Aleardi and Count Arrivabene are excellent, particularly the former. Aleardi was a poet of wonderful descriptive power, and though, as he said himself, he subordinated his love of poetry to his love of country, yet in such service he found perfect freedom.

The article on Edoardo Fusco also is full of interest, and is a timely tribute to the memory of one who did so much for the education and culture of modern Italy. On the whole, the book is well worth reading; so well worth reading, indeed, that we hope that the foolish remarks on the Greek Drama will be amended in a second edition, or, which would be better still, struck out altogether. They show a want of knowledge that must be the result of years of study.

(1) *The Master of Tanagra*. Translated from the German of Ernst von Wildenbruch by the Baroness von Lauer. (H. Grevel and Co.)

(2) *Molière et Shakespeare*. By Paul Stapfer. (Hachette.)

REVIEWS

(3) *Annals of the Life of Shakespeare.* (Sampson Low, Marston and Co.)

(4) *Poems by Allan Ramsay.* Selected and arranged, with a Biographical Sketch of the Poet, by J. Logie Robertson, M.A. 'Canterbury Poets.' (Walter Scott.)

(5) *Dante for Beginners.* By Arabella Shore. (Chapman and Hall.)

(6) *Studies in Italian Literature.* By Miss Phillimore. (Sampson Low, Marston and Co.)

A CHEAP EDITION OF A GREAT MAN

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 18, 1887.)

FORMERLY we used to canonise our great men; nowadays we vulgarise them. The vulgarisation of Rossetti has been going on for some time past with really remarkable success, and there seems no probability at present of the process being discontinued. The grass was hardly green upon the quiet grave in Birchington churchyard when Mr. Hall Caine and Mr. William Sharp rushed into print with their *Memoirs and Recollections*. Then came the usual mob of magazine-hacks with their various views and attitudes, and now Mr. Joseph Knight has produced for the edification of the British public a popular biography of the poet of the Blessed Damozel, the painter of Dante's Dream.

It is only fair to state that Mr. Knight's work is much better than that of his predecessors in the same field. His book is, on the whole, modestly and simply written; whatever its other faults may be, it is at least free from affectation of any kind; and it makes no serious pretence at being either exhaustive or definitive. Yet the best we can say of it is that it is just the sort of biography Guildenstern might have written of Hamlet. Nor does its unsatisfactory

A CHEAP EDITION OF A GREAT MAN

character come merely from the ludicrous inadequacy of the materials at Mr. Knight's disposal; it is the whole scheme and method of the book that is radically wrong. Rossetti's was a great personality, and personalities such as his do not easily survive shilling primers. Sooner or later they have inevitably to come down to the level of their biographers, and in the present instance nothing could be more absolutely commonplace than the picture Mr. Knight gives us of the wonderful seer and singer whose life he has so recklessly essayed to write.

No doubt there are many people who will be deeply interested to know that Rossetti was once chased round his garden by an infuriated zebu he was trying to exhibit to Mr. Whistler, or that he had a great affection for a dog called 'Dizzy,' or that 'sloshy' was one of his favourite words of contempt, or that Mr. Gosse thought him very like Chaucer in appearance, or that he had 'an absolute disqualification' for whist-playing, or that he was very fond of quoting the *Bab Ballads*, or that he once said that if he could live by writing poetry he would see painting d——d! For our part, however, we cannot help expressing our regret that such a shallow and superficial biography as this should ever have been published. It is but a sorry task to rip the twisted ravel from the worn garment of life and to turn the grout in a drained cup. Better, after all, that we knew a painter only through his vision and a poet through his song, than that the image of a great man should be marred and made mean for us by the clumsy geniality of good intentions. A true artist, and such Rossetti undoubtedly was, reveals himself so perfectly in his work, that unless a biographer has something more valuable to give

REVIEWS

us than idle anecdotes and unmeaning tales, his labour is misspent and his industry misdirected.

Bad, however, as is Mr. Knight's treatment of Rossetti's life, his treatment of Rossetti's poetry is infinitely worse. Considering the small size of the volume, and the consequently limited number of extracts, the amount of misquotation is almost incredible, and puts all recent achievements in this sphere of modern literature completely into the shade. The fine line in the first canto of *Rose Mary*:

What glints there like a lance that flees?

appears as:

What glints there like a *glance* that flees?

which is very painful nonsense; in the description of that graceful and fanciful sonnet *Autumn Idleness*, the deer are represented as 'grazing from hillock eaves' instead of gazing from hillock-eaves; the opening of *Dantis Tenebræ* is rendered quite incomprehensible by the substitution of 'my' for 'thy' in the second line; even such a well-known ballad as *Sister Helen* is misquoted, and, indeed, from the *Burden of Nineveh*, the *Blessed Damozel*, the *King's Tragedy* and Guido Cavalcanti's lovely *ballata*, down to the *Portrait* and such sonnets as *Love-sweetness*, *Farewell to the Glen*, and *A Match with the Moon*, there is not one single poem that does not display some careless error or some stupid misprint.

As for Rossetti's elaborate system of punctuation, Mr. Knight pays no attention to it whatsoever. Indeed, he shows quite a rollicking indifference to all the secrets and subtleties of style, and inserts or removes stops in a manner that is absolutely destructive to the lyrical beauty of the verse. The hyphen, also, so constantly employed by Rossetti in the case

A CHEAP EDITION OF A GREAT MAN

of such expressions as 'hillock-eaves' quoted above, 'hill-fire,' 'birth-hour,' and the like, is almost invariably disregarded, and by the brilliant omission of a semicolon Mr. Knight has succeeded in spoiling one of the best stanzas in *The Staff and the Scrip*—a poem, by the way, that he speaks of as *The Staff and the Scrip* (*sic*). After this tedious comedy of errors it seems almost unnecessary to point out that the earliest Italian poet is not called Ciullo *D'Alcano* (*sic*), or that *The Bothie of Toper-na-Fuosich* (*sic*) is not the title of Clough's boisterous epic, or that *Dante and his Cycle* (*sic*) is not the name Rossetti gave to his collection of translations; and why *Troy Town* should appear in the index as *Tory Town* is really quite inexplicable, unless it is intended as a compliment to Mr. Hall Caine who once dedicated, or rather tried to dedicate, to Rossetti a lecture on the relations of poets to politics. We are sorry, too, to find an English dramatic critic misquoting Shakespeare, as we had always been of opinion that this was a privilege reserved specially for our English actors.

We sincerely hope that there will soon be an end to all biographies of this kind. They rob life of much of its dignity and its wonder, add to death itself a new terror, and make one wish that all art were anonymous. Nor could there have been any more unfortunate choice of a subject for popular treatment than that to which we owe the memoir that now lies before us. A pillar of fire to the few who knew him, and of cloud to the many who knew him not, Dante Gabriel Rossetti lived apart from the gossip and tittle-tattle of a shallow age. He never trafficked with the merchants for his soul, nor brought his wares into the market-place for the idle to gape at. Passionate and romantic though

REVIEWS

he was, yet there was in his nature something of high austerity. He loved seclusion, and hated notoriety, and would have shuddered at the idea that within a few years after his death he was to make his appearance in a series of popular biographies, sandwiched between the author of *Pickwick* and the Great Lexicographer. One man alone, the friend his verse won for him, did he desire should write his life, and it is to Mr. Theodore Watts that we, too, must look to give us the real Rossetti. It may be admitted at once that Mr. Watts's subject has for the moment been a little spoiled for him. Rude hands have touched it, and unmusical voices have made it sound almost common in our ears. Yet none the less is it for him to tell us of the marvel of this man whose art he has analysed with such exquisite insight, whose life he knows as no one else can know it, whom he so loyally loved and tended, and by whom he was so loyally beloved in turn. As for the others, the scribblers and nibblers of literature, if they indeed reverence Rossetti's memory, let them pay him the one homage he would most have valued, the gracious homage of silence. 'Though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me,' says Hamlet to his false friend, and even so might Rossetti speak to those well-intentioned mediocrities who would seem to know his stops and would sound him to the top of his compass. True, they cannot fret him now, for he has passed beyond the possibility of pain; yet they cannot play upon him either; it is not for them to pluck out the heart of his mystery.

There is, however, one feature of this book that deserves unstinted praise. Mr. Anderson's bibliography will be found of immense use by every

MR. MORRIS'S *ODYSSEY*

student of Rossetti's work and influence. Perhaps Young's very powerful attack on Pre-Raphaelitism, as expounded by Mr. Ruskin (Longmans, 1857), might be included, but, in all other respects, it seems quite complete, and the chronological list of paintings and drawings is really admirable. When this unfortunate 'Great Writers' Series comes to an end, Mr. Anderson's bibliographies should be collected together and published in a separate volume. At present they are in a very second-rate company indeed.

Life of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. By Joseph Knight. 'Great Writers' Series. (Walter Scott.)

MR. MORRIS'S *ODYSSEY*

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 26, 1887.)

OF all our modern poets, Mr. William Morris is the one best qualified by nature and by art to translate for us the marvellous epic of the wanderings of Odysseus. For he is our only true story-singer since Chaucer; if he is a Socialist, he is also a Saga-man; and there was a time when he was never wearied of telling us strange legends of gods and men, wonderful tales of chivalry and romance. Master as he is of decorative and descriptive verse, he has all the Greek's joy in the visible aspect of things, all the Greek's sense of delicate and delightful detail, all the Greek's pleasure in beautiful textures and exquisite materials and imaginative designs; nor can any one have a keener sympathy with the Homeric admiration for the workers and the craftsmen in the various arts, from the stainers in white ivory and the embroiderers in purple and gold, to the weaver sitting by the loom and the dyer dipping in the vat, the chaser of shield and

REVIEWS

helmet, the carver of wood or stone. And to all this is added the true temper of high romance, the power to make the past as real to us as the present, the subtle instinct to discern passion, the swift impulse to portray life.

It is no wonder the lovers of Greek literature have so eagerly looked forward to Mr. Morris's version of the Odyssean epic, and now that the first volume has appeared, it is not extravagant to say that of all our English translations this is the most perfect and the most satisfying. In spite of Coleridge's well-known views on the subject, we have always held that Chapman's *Odyssey* is immeasurably inferior to his *Iliad*, the mere difference of metre alone being sufficient to set the former in a secondary place; Pope's *Odyssey*, with its glittering rhetoric and smart antithesis, has nothing of the grand manner of the original; Cowper is dull, and Bryant dreadful, and Worsley too full of Spenserian prettinesses; while excellent though Messrs. Butcher and Lang's version undoubtedly is in many respects, still, on the whole, it gives us merely the facts of the *Odyssey* without providing anything of its artistic effect. Avia's translation even, though better than almost all its predecessors in the same field, is not worthy of taking rank beside Mr. Morris's, for here we have a true work of art, a rendering not merely of language into language, but of poetry into poetry, and though the new spirit added in the transfusion may seem to many rather Norse than Greek, and, perhaps at times, more boisterous than beautiful, there is yet a vigour of life in every line, a splendid ardour through each canto, that stirs the blood while one reads like the sound of a trumpet, and that, producing a physical as well as a spiritual delight,

MR. MORRIS'S *ODYSSEY*

exults the senses no less than it exalts the soul. It may be admitted at once that, here and there, Mr. Morris has missed something of the marvellous dignity of the Homeric verse, and that, in his desire for rushing and ringing metre, he has occasionally sacrificed majesty to movement, and made stateliness give place to speed; but it is really only in such blank verse as Milton's that this effect of calm and lofty music can be attained, and in all other respects blank verse is the most inadequate medium for reproducing the full flow and fervour of the Greek hexameter. One merit, at any rate, Mr. Morris's version entirely and absolutely possesses. It is, in no sense of the word, literary; it seems to deal immediately with life itself, and to take from the reality of things its own form and colour; it is always direct and simple, and at its best has something of the 'large utterance of the early gods.'

As for individual passages of beauty, nothing could be better than the wonderful description of the house of the Phœacian king, or the whole telling of the lovely legend of Circe, or the manner in which the pageant of the pale phantoms in Hades is brought before our eyes. Perhaps the huge epic humour of the escape from the Cyclops is hardly realised, but there is always a linguistic difficulty about rendering this fascinating story into English, and where we are given so much poetry we should not complain about losing a pun; and the exquisite idyll of the meeting and parting with the daughter of Alcinous is really delightfully told. How good, for instance, is this passage taken at random from the Sixth Book:

But therewith unto the handmaids goodly Odysseus spake:
'Stand off I bid you, damsels, while the work in hand I take,

REVIEWS

And wash the brine from my shoulders, and sleek them all
around

Since verily now this long while sweet oil they have not found.

But before you nought will I wash me, for shame I have indeed,
Amidst of fair-tressed damsels to be all bare of weed.'

So he spake and aloof they gat them, and thereof they told the *may*,

But Odysseus with the river from his body washed away

The brine from his back and his shoulders wrought broad and
mightily,

And from his head was he wiping the foam of the untilled sea ;

But when he had thoroughly washed him, and the oil about him
had shed

He did upon the raiment the gift of the maid unwed.

But Athene, Zeus-begotten, dealt with him in such wise

That bigger yet was his seeming, and mightier to all eyes,

With the hair on his head crisp curling as the bloom of the daffodil.

And as when the silver with gold is o'erlaid by a man of skill,

Yea, a craftsman whom Hephæstus and Pallas Athene have taught

To be master over masters, and lovely work he hath wrought ;

So she round his head and his shoulders shed grace abundantly.

It may be objected by some that the line

With the hair on his head crisp curling as the bloom of the daffodil,

is a rather fanciful version of

ὄσας ἦκε κόμας, δακινθίνῃ ἀνθει ὁμοίας,

and it certainly seems probable that the allusion is to the dark colour of the hero's hair ; still, the point is not one of much importance, though it may be worth noting that a similar expression occurs in Ogilby's superbly illustrated translation of the *Odyssey*, published in 1665, where Charles II.'s Master of the Revels in Ireland gives the passage thus :

Minerva renders him more tall and fair,

Curling in rings like daffodils his hair.

No anthology, however, can show the true merit of Mr. Morris's translation, whose real merit does not depend on stray beauties, nor is revealed by

A BATCH OF NOVELS

chance selections, but lies in the absolute rightness and coherence of the whole, in its purity and justice of touch, its freedom from affectation and commonplace, its harmony of form and matter. It is sufficient to say that this is a poet's version of a poet, and for such surely we should be thankful. In these latter days of coarse and vulgar literature, it is something to have made the great sea-epic of the South native and natural to our northern isle, something to have shown that our English speech may be a pipe through which Greek lips can blow, something to have taught Nausicaa to speak the same language as Perdita.

The Odyssey of Homer. Done into English Verse by William Morris, author of *The Earthly Paradise*. In two volumes. Volume I. (Reeves and Turner.)

For review of Volume II. see *Mr. Morris's Completion of the Odyssey*, page 215.

A BATCH OF NOVELS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, May 2, 1887.)

OF the three great Russian novelists of our time Tourgenieff is by far the finest artist. He has that spirit of exquisite selection, that delicate choice of detail, which is the essence of style; his work is entirely free from any personal intention; and by taking existence at its most fiery-coloured moments he can distil into a few pages of perfect prose the moods and passions of many lives.

Count Tolstoi's method is much larger, and his field of vision more extended. He reminds us sometimes of Paul Veronese, and, like that great painter, can crowd, without over-crowding, the giant canvas on which he works. We may not at first gain from his works that artistic unity of impression which is

REVIEWS

Tourgenieff's chief charm, but once that we have mastered the details the whole seems to have the grandeur and the simplicity of an epic. Dostoieffski differs widely from both his rivals. He is not so fine an artist as Tourgenieff, for he deals more with the facts than with the effects of life; nor has he Tolstoi's largeness of vision and epic dignity; but he has qualities that are distinctively and absolutely his own, such as a fierce intensity of passion and concentration of impulse, a power of dealing with the deepest mysteries of psychology and the most hidden springs of life, and a realism that is pitiless in its fidelity, and terrible because it is true. Some time ago we had occasion to draw attention to his marvellous novel *Crime and Punishment*, where in the haunt of impurity and vice a harlot and an assassin meet together to read the story of Dives and Lazarus, and the outcast girl leads the sinner to make atonement for his sin; nor is the book entitled *Injury and Insult* at all inferior to that great masterpiece. Mean and ordinary though the surroundings of the story may seem, the heroine Natasha is like one of the noble victims of Greek tragedy; she is Antigone with the passion of Phædra, and it is impossible to approach her without a feeling of awe. Greek also is the gloom of Nemesis that hangs over each character, only it is a Nemesis that does not stand outside of life, but is part of our own nature and of the same material as life itself. Aleósha, the beautiful young lad whom Natasha follows to her doom, is a second Tito Melema, and has all Tito's charm and grace and fascination. Yet he is different. He would never have denied Baldassare in the Square at Florence, nor lied to Romola about Tessa. He has a magnificent, momentary sincerity, a boyish

A BATCH OF NOVELS

unconsciousness of all that life signifies, an ardent enthusiasm for all that life cannot give. There is nothing calculating about him. He never thinks evil, he only does it. From a psychological point of view he is one of the most interesting characters of modern fiction, as from an artistic he is one of the most attractive. As we grow to know him he stirs strange questions for us, and makes us feel that it is not the wicked only who do wrong, nor the bad alone who work evil.

And by what a subtle objective method does Dostoieffski show us his characters! He never tickets them with a list nor labels them with a description. We grow to know them very gradually, as we know people whom we meet in society, at first by little tricks of manner, personal appearance, fancies in dress, and the like; and afterwards by their deeds and words; and even then they constantly elude us, for though Dostoieffski may lay bare for us the secrets of their nature, yet he never explains his personages away; they are always surprising us by something that they say or do, and keep to the end the eternal mystery of life.

Irrespective of its value as a work of art, this novel possesses a deep autobiographical interest also, as the character of Vania, the poor student who loves Natasha through all her sin and shame, is Dostoieffski's study of himself. Goethe once had to delay the completion of one of his novels till experience had furnished him with new situations, but almost before he had arrived at manhood Dostoieffski knew life in its most real forms; poverty and suffering, pain and misery, prison, exile, and love, were soon familiar to him, and by the lips of Vania he has told his own story. This note of personal feeling, this

REVIEWS

harsh reality of actual experience, undoubtedly gives the book something of its strange fervour and terrible passion, yet it has not made it egotistic; we see things from every point of view, and we feel, not that fiction has been trammelled by fact, but that fact itself has become ideal and imaginative. Piti- less, too, though Dostoieffski is in his method as an artist, as a man he is full of human pity for all, for those who do evil as well as for those who suffer it, for the selfish no less than for those whose lives are wrecked for others and whose sacrifice is in vain. Since *Adam Bede* and *Le Père Goriot* no more powerful novel has been written than *Insult and Injury*.

Mr. Hardinge's book *Willow Garth* deals, strangely enough, with something like the same idea, though the treatment is, of course, entirely different. A girl of high birth falls passionately in love with a young farm-bailiff who is a sort of Arcadian Antinous and a very Ganymede in gaiters. Social difficulties naturally intervene, so she drowns her handsome rustic in a convenient pond. Mr. Hardinge has a most charming style, and, as a writer, possesses both distinction and grace. The book is a delightful combination of romance and satire, and the heroine's crime is treated in the most picturesque manner possible.

Marcella Grace tells of modern life in Ireland, and is one of the best books Miss Mulholland has ever published. In its artistic reserve, and the perfect simplicity of its style, it is an excellent model for all lady-novelists to follow, and the scene where the heroine finds the man, who has been sent to shoot her, lying fever-stricken behind a hedge with his gun by his side, is really remarkable. Nor could anything

SOME NOVELS

be better than Miss Mulholland's treatment of external nature. She never shrieks over scenery like a tourist, nor wearies us with sunsets like the Scotch school; but all through her book there is a subtle atmosphere of purple hills and silent moorland; she makes us live with nature and not merely look at it.

The accomplished authoress of *Soap* was once compared to George Eliot by the *Court Journal*, and to Carlyle by the *Daily News*, but we fear that we cannot compete with our contemporaries in these daring comparisons. Her present book is very clever, rather vulgar, and contains some fine examples of bad French.

As for *A Marked Man*, *That Winter Night*, and *Driven Home*, the first shows some power of description and treatment, but is sadly incomplete; the second is quite unworthy of any man of letters, and the third is absolutely silly. We sincerely hope that a few more novels like these will be published, as the public will then find out that a bad book is very dear at a shilling.

(1) *Injury and Insult*. By Fedor Dostoieffski. Translated from the Russian by Frederick Whishaw. (Vizetelly and Co.)

(2) *The Willow Garth*. By W. M. Hardinge. (Bentley and Son.)

(3) *Marcella Grace*. By Rosa Mulholland. (Macmillan and Co.)

(4) *Soap*. By Constance MacEwen. (Arrowsmith.)

(5) *A Marked Man*. By Faucet Streets. (Hamilton and Adams.)

(6) *That Winter Night*. By Robert Buchanan. (Arrowsmith.)

(7) *Driven Home*. By Evelyn Owen. (Arrowsmith.)

SOME NOVELS

(*Saturday Review*, May 7, 1887.)

THE only form of fiction in which real characters do not seem out of place is history. In novels they are detestable, and *Miss Bayle's Romance* is entirely spoiled as a realistic

REVIEWS

presentation of life by the author's attempt to introduce into her story a whole mob of modern celebrities and notorieties, including the Heir Apparent and Mr. Edmund Yates. The identity of the latter personage is delicately veiled under the pseudonym of 'Mr. Atlas, editor of the *World*,' but the former appears as 'The Prince of Wales' *pur et simple*, and is represented as spending his time yachting in the Channel and junketing at Homburg with a second-rate American family who, by the way, always address him as 'Prince,' and show in other respects an ignorance that even their ignorance cannot excuse. Indeed, His Royal Highness is no mere spectator of the story; he is one of the chief actors in it, and it is through his influence that the noisy Chicago *belle*, whose lack of romance gives the book its title, achieves her chief social success. As for the conversation with which the Prince is credited, it is of the most amazing kind. We find him on one page gravely discussing the depression of trade with Mr. Ezra P. Bayle, a shoddy American millionaire, who promptly replies, 'Depression of fiddle-sticks, Prince'; in another passage he naïvely inquires of the same shrewd speculator whether the thunderstorms and prairie fires of the West are still 'on so grand a scale' as when he visited Illinois; and we are told in the second volume that, after contemplating the magnificent view from St. Ives he exclaimed with enthusiasm, 'Surely Mr. Brett must have had a scene like this in his eye when he painted *Britannia's Realm*? I never saw anything more beautiful.' Even Her Majesty figures in this extraordinary story in spite of the excellent aphorism *ne touchez pas à la reine*; and when Miss Alma J. Bayle is married to the Duke of Windsor's second

SOME NOVELS

son she receives from the hands of royalty not merely the customary Cashmere shawl of Court tradition, but also a copy of *Diaries in the Highlands* inscribed 'To the Lady Plowden Eton, with the kindest wishes of Victoria R.I.', a mistake that the Queen, of all persons in the world, is the least likely to have committed. Perhaps, however, we are treating *Miss Bayle's Romance* too seriously. The book has really no claim to be regarded as a novel at all. It is simply a society paragraph expanded into three volumes and, like most paragraphs of the kind, is in the worst possible taste. We are not by any means surprised that the author, while making free with the names of others, has chosen to conceal his own name; for no reputation could possibly survive the production of such silly, stupid work; but we must say that we are surprised that this book has been brought out by the Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen. We do not know what the duties attaching to this office are, but we should not have thought that the issuing of vulgar stories about the Royal Family was one of them.

From Heather Hills is very pleasant reading indeed. It is healthy without being affected; and though Mrs. Perks gives us many descriptions of Scotch scenery we are glad to say that she has not adopted the common chromo-lithographic method of those popular North British novelists who have never yet fully realised the difference between colour and colours, and who imagine that by emptying a paint box over every page they can bring before us the magic of mist and mountain, the wonder of sea or glen. Mrs. Perks has a grace and delicacy of touch that is quite charming, and she can deal with nature without either botanising or being blatant,

REVIEWS

which nowadays is a somewhat rare accomplishment. The interest of the story centres on Margaret Dalrymple, a lovely Scotch girl who is brought to London by her aunt, takes every one by storm and falls in love with young Lord Erinwood, who is on the brink of proposing to her when he is dissuaded from doing so by a philosophic man of the world who thinks that a woodland Artemis is a bad wife for an English peer, and that no woman who has a habit of saying exactly what she means can possibly get on in smart society. The would-be philosopher is ultimately hoist with his own petard, as he falls in love himself with Margaret Dalrymple, and as for the weak young hero he is promptly snatched up, rather against his will, by a sort of Becky Sharp, who succeeds in becoming Lady Erinwood. However, a convenient railway accident, the *deus ex machina* of nineteenth-century novels, carries Miss Norma Novello off; and everybody is finally made happy, except, of course, the philosopher, who gets only a lesson where he wanted to get love. There is just one part of the novel to which we must take exception. The whole story of Alice Morgan is not merely needlessly painful, but it is of very little artistic value. A tragedy may be the basis of a story, but it should never be simply a casual episode. At least, if it is so, it entirely fails to produce any artistic effect. We hope, too, that in Mrs. Perks's next novel she will not allow her hero to misquote English poetry. This is a privilege reserved for Mrs. Malaprop.

A constancy that lasts through three volumes is often rather tedious, so that we are glad to make the acquaintance of Miss Lilian Ufford, the heroine of Mrs. Houston's *A Heart on Fire*. This young

SOME NOVELS

lady begins by being desperately in love with Mr. Frank Thorburn, a struggling schoolmaster, and ends by being desperately in love with Colonel Dallas, a rich country gentleman who spends most of his time and his money in preaching a crusade against beer. After she gets engaged to the Colonel she discovers that Mr. Thorburn is in reality Lord Netherby's son and heir, and for the moment she seems to have a true woman's regret at having given up a pretty title; but all ends well, and the story is brightly and pleasantly told. The Colonel is a middle-aged Romeo of the most impassioned character, and as it is his heart that is 'on fire,' he may serve as a psychological pendant to *La Femme de Quarante Ans*.

Mr. G. Manville Fenn's *A Bag of Diamonds* belongs to the Drury Lane School of Fiction and is a sort of fireside melodrama for the family circle. It is evidently written to thrill Bayswater, and no doubt Bayswater will be thrilled. Indeed, there is a great deal that is exciting in the book, and the scene in which a kindly policeman assists two murderers to convey their unconscious victim into a four-wheeled cab, under the impression that they are a party of guests returning from a convivial supper in Bloomsbury, is quite excellent of its kind, and, on the whole, not too improbable, considering that shilling literature is always making demands on our credulity without ever appealing to our imagination.

The Great Hesper, by Mr. Frank Barrett, has at least the merit of introducing into fiction an entirely new character. The villain is Nyctalops, and, though we are not prepared to say that there is any necessary connection between Nyctalopy and crime, we are quite ready to accept Mr. Barrett's picture of

REVIEWS

Jan Van Hoeck as an interesting example of the modern method of dealing with life. For, Pathology is rapidly becoming the basis of sensational literature, and in art, as in politics, there is a great future for monsters. What a Nyctalops is we leave Mr. Barrett to explain. His novel belongs to a class of book that many people might read once for curiosity but nobody could read a second time for pleasure.

A Day after the Fair is an account of a holiday tour through Scotland taken by two young barristers, one of whom rescues a pretty girl from drowning, falls in love with her, and is rewarded for his heroism by seeing her married to his friend. The idea of the book is not bad, but the treatment is very unsatisfactory, and combines the triviality of the tourist with the dulness of good intentions.

'Mr. Winter' is always amusing and audacious, though we cannot say that we entirely approve of the names he gives to his stories. *Bootles' Baby* was a masterpiece, but *Houp-la* was a terrible title, and *That Imp* is not much better. The book, however, is undoubtedly clever, and the Imp in question is not a Nyctalops nor a specimen for a travelling museum, but a very pretty girl who, because an officer has kissed her without any serious matrimonial intentions, exerts all her fascinations to bring the unfortunate Lovelace to her feet and, having succeeded in doing so, promptly rejects him with a virtuous indignation that is as delightful as it is out of place. We must confess that we have a good deal of sympathy for 'Driver' Dallas, of the Royal Horse, who suffers fearful agonies at what he imagines is a heartless flirtation on the part of the lady of his dreams; but the story is told from the Imp's

THE POETS' CORNER

point of view, and as such we must accept it. There is a very brilliant description of a battle in the Soudan, and the account of barrack life is, of course, admirable. So admirable indeed is it that we hope that 'Mr. Winter' will soon turn his attention to new topics and try to handle fresh subjects. It would be sad if such a clever and observant writer became merely the garrison hack of literature. We would also earnestly beg 'Mr. Winter' not to write foolish prefaces about unappreciative critics; for it is only mediocrities and old maids who consider it a grievance to be misunderstood.

(1) *Miss Bayle's Romance: A Story of To-Day.* (Bentley and Son, Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen.)

(2) *From Heather Hills.* By Mrs. J. Hartley Perks. (Hurst and Blackett.)

(3) *A Heart on Fire.* By Mrs. Houston. (F. V. White and Co.)

(4) *A Bag of Diamonds.* By George Manville Fenn. (Ward and Downey.)

(5) *The Great Hesper.* By Frank Barrett. (Ward and Downey.)

(6) *A Day after the Fair.* By William Cairns. (Swan Sonnenschein and Co.)

(7) *That Imp.* By John Strange Winter, Author of *Bootles' Baby, etc.* (F. V. White and Co.)

THE POETS' CORNER

III

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, May 30, 1887.)

SUCH a pseudonym for a poet as 'Glenessa' reminds us of the good old days of the Della Cruscans, but it would not be fair to attribute Glenessa's poetry to any known school of literature, either past or present. Whatever qualities it possesses are entirely its own. Glenessa's most ambitious work, and the one that gives the title to

REVIEWS

his book, is a poetic drama about the Garden of Eden. The subject is undoubtedly interesting, but the execution can hardly be said to be quite worthy of it. Devils, on account of their inherent wickedness, may be excused for singing—

Then we'll rally—rally—rally—
Yes, we'll rally—rally O!—

but such scenes as—

Enter ADAM.

ADAM (*excitedly*). Eve, where art thou?

EVE (*surprised*).

Oh!

ADAM (*in astonishment*).

Eve! my God, she's there

Beside that fatal tree;

or—

Enter ADAM and EVE.

EVE (*in astonishment*). Well, is not this surprising?

ADAM (*distracted*). It is—

seem to belong rather to the sphere of comedy than to that of serious verse. Poor Glenessa! the gods have not made him poetical, and we hope he will abandon his wooing of the muse. He is fitted, not for better, but for other things.

Vortigern and Rowena is a cantata about the Britons and the Danes. There is a Druid priestess who sings of Cynthia and Endymion, and a chorus of jubilant Vikings. It is charmingly printed, and as a libretto for music quite above the average.

As truly religious people are resigned to everything, even to mediocre poetry, there is no reason at all why Madame Guyon's verses should not be popular with a large section of the community. Their editor, Mr. Dyer, has reprinted the translations Cowper made for Mr. Bull, added some

THE POETS' CORNER

versions of his own and written a pleasing preface about this gentle seventeenth-century saint whose life was her best, indeed her only true poem.

Mr. Pierce has discovered a tenth muse and writes impassioned verses to the Goddess of Chess whom he apostrophises as 'Sublime Caissa'! Zukertort and Steinitz are his heroes, and he is as melodious on mates as he is graceful on gambits. We are glad to say, however, that he has other subjects, and one of his poems beginning :

Cedar boxes deeply cut,
China bowls of quaint device,
Heap'd with rosy leaves and spice,
Violets in old volumes shut—

is very dainty and musical.

Mr. Clifford Harrison is well known as the most poetic of our reciters, but as a writer himself of poetry he is not so famous. Yet his little volume *In Hours of Leisure* contains some charming pieces, and many of the short fourteen-line poems are really pretty, though they are very defective in form. Indeed, of form Mr. Harrison is curiously careless. Such rhymes as 'calm' and 'charm,' 'baize' and 'place,' 'jeu' and 'knew,' are quite dreadful, while 'operas' and 'stars,' 'Gaútama' and 'afar' are too bad even for Steinway Hall. Those who have Keats's genius may borrow Keats's cockneyisms, but from minor poets we have a right to expect some regard to the ordinary technique of verse. However, if Mr. Harrison has not always form, at least he has always feeling. He has a wonderful command over all the egotistic emotions, is quite conscious of the artistic value of remorse, and displays a sincere sympathy with his own moments

REVIEWS

of sadness, playing upon his moods as a young lady plays upon the piano. Now and then we come across some delicate descriptive touches, such as

The cuckoo knew its latest day had come,
And told its name once more to all the hills,

and whenever Mr. Harrison writes about nature he is certainly pleasing and picturesque but, as a rule, he is over-anxious about himself and forgets that the personal expression of joy or sorrow is not poetry, though it may afford excellent material for a sentimental diary.

The daily increasing class of readers that likes unintelligible poetry should study *Æonial*. It is in many ways a really remarkable production. Very fantastic, very daring, crowded with strange metaphor and clouded by monstrous imagery, it has a sort of turbid splendour about it, and should the author some day add meaning to his music he may give us a true work of art. At present he hardly realises that an artist should be articulate.

Seymour's Inheritance is a short novel in blank verse. On the whole, it is very harmless both in manner and matter, but we must protest against such lines as

And in the windows of his heart the blinds
Of happiness had been drawn down by Grief,

for a simile committing suicide is always a depressing spectacle. Some of the other poems are so simple and modest that we hope Mr. Ross will not carry out his threat of issuing a 'more pretentious volume.' Pretentious volumes of poetry are very common and very worthless.

THE POETS' CORNER

Mr. Brodie's *Lyrics of the Sea* are spirited and manly, and show a certain freedom of rhythmical movement, pleasant in days of wooden verse. He is at his best, however, in his sonnets. Their architecture is not always of the finest order but, here and there, one meets with lines that are graceful and felicitous.

Like silver swallows on a summer morn
Cutting the air with momentary wings,

is pretty, and on flowers Mr. Brodie writes quite charmingly. The only thoroughly bad piece in the book is *The Workman's Song*. Nothing can be said in favour of

Is there a bit of blue, boys?
Is there a bit of blue?
In heaven's leaden hue, boys?
'Tis hope's eye peeping through . . .

for optimism of this kind is far more dispiriting than Schopenhauer or Hartmann at their worst, nor are there really any grounds for supposing that the British workman enjoys third-rate poetry.

(1) *The Discovery and Other Poems*. By Glenessa. (National Publishing Co.)

(2) *Vortigern and Rowena: A Dramatic Cantata*. By Edwin Ellis Griffin. (Hutchings and Crowsley.)

(3) *The Poems of Madame de la Mothe Guyon*. Edited and arranged by the Rev. A. Saunders Dyer, M.A. (Bryce and Son.)

(4) *Stanzas and Sonnets*. By J. Pierce, M.A. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

(5) *In Hours of Leisure*. By Clifford Harrison. (Kegan Paul.)

(6) *Æonial*. By the Author of *The White Africans*. (Elliot Stock.)

(7) *Seymour's Inheritance*. By James Ross. (Arrowsmith.)

(8) *Lyrics of the Sea*. By E. H. Brodie. (Bell and Sons.)

REVIEWS

MR. PATER'S *IMAGINARY PORTRAITS*

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, June 11, 1887.)

TO convey ideas through the medium of images has always been the aim of those who are artists as well as thinkers in literature, and it is to a desire to give a sensuous environment to intellectual concepts that we owe Mr. Pater's last volume. For these Imaginary or, as we should prefer to call them, Imaginative Portraits of his, form a series of philosophic studies in which the philosophy is tempered by personality, and the thought shown under varying conditions of mood and manner, the very permanence of each principle gaining something through the change and colour of the life through which it finds expression. The most fascinating of all these pictures is undoubtedly that of Sebastian Van Storck. The account of Watteau is perhaps a little too fanciful, and the description of him as one who was 'always a seeker after something in the world, that is there in no satisfying measure, or not at all,' seems to us more applicable to him who saw Mona Lisa sitting among the rocks than to the gay and debonair *peintre des fêtes galantes*. But Sebastian, the grave young Dutch philosopher, is charmingly drawn. From the first glimpse we get of him, skating over the water-meadows with his plume of squirrel's tail and his fur muff, in all the modest pleasantness of boyhood, down to his strange death in the desolate house amid the sands of the Helder, we seem to see him, to know him, almost to hear the low music of his voice. He is a dreamer, as the common phrase goes, and yet he is poetical in this sense, that his theorems shape life for him, directly. Early in youth he is

MR. PATER'S *IMAGINARY PORTRAITS*

stirred by a fine saying of Spinoza, and sets himself to realise the ideal of an intellectual disinterestedness, separating himself more and more from the transient world of sensation, accident and even affection, till what is finite and relative becomes of no interest to him, and he feels that as nature is but a thought of his, so he himself is but a passing thought of God. This conception, of the power of a mere metaphysical abstraction over the mind of one so fortunately endowed for the reception of the sensible world, is exceedingly delightful, and Mr. Pater has never written a more subtle psychological study, the fact that Sebastian dies in an attempt to save the life of a little child giving to the whole story a touch of poignant pathos and sad irony.

Denys l'Auxerrois is suggested by a figure found, or said to be found, on some old tapestries in Auxerre, the figure of a 'flaxen and flowery creature, sometimes wellnigh naked among the vine-leaves, sometimes muffled in skins against the cold, sometimes in the dress of a monk, but always with a strong impress of real character and incident from the veritable streets' of the town itself. From this strange design Mr. Pater has fashioned a curious mediæval myth of the return of Dionysus among men, a myth steeped in colour and passion and old romance, full of wonder and full of worship, Denys himself being half animal and half god, making the world mad with a new ecstasy of living, stirring the artists simply by his visible presence, drawing the marvel of music from reed and pipe, and slain at last in a stage-play by those who had loved him. In its rich affluence of imagery this story is like a picture by Mantegna, and indeed Mantegna might have suggested the description of the pageant in which Denys

173

REVIEWS

rides upon a gaily-painted chariot, in soft silken raiment and, for head-dress, a strange elephant scalp with gilded tusks.

If *Denys l'Auxerrois* symbolises the passion of the senses and *Sebastian Van Storck* the philosophic passion, as they certainly seem to do, though no mere formula or definition can adequately express the freedom and variety of the life that they portray, the passion for the imaginative world of art is the basis of the story of *Duke Carl of Rosenmold*. Duke Carl is not unlike the late King of Bavaria, in his love of France, his admiration for the *Grand Monarque* and his fantastic desire to amaze and to bewilder, but the resemblance is possibly only a chance one. In fact Mr. Pater's young hero is the precursor of the *Aufklärung* of the last century, the German precursor of Herder and Lessing and Goethe himself, and finds the forms of art ready to his hand without any national spirit to fill them or make them vital and responsive. He too dies, trampled to death by the soldiers of the country he so much admired, on the night of his marriage with a peasant girl, the very failure of his life lending him a certain melancholy grace and dramatic interest.

On the whole, then, this is a singularly attractive book. Mr. Pater is an intellectual impressionist. He does not weary us with any definite doctrine or seek to suit life to any formal creed. He is always looking for exquisite moments and, when he has found them, he analyses them with delicate and delightful art and then passes on, often to the opposite pole of thought or feeling, knowing that every mood has its own quality and charm and is justified by its mere existence. He has taken the sensationalism

MR. PATER'S *IMAGINARY PORTRAITS*

of Greek philosophy and made it a new method of art criticism. As for his style, it is curiously ascetic. Now and then, we come across phrases with a strange sensuousness of expression, as when he tells us how Denys l'Auxerrois, on his return from a long journey, 'ate flesh for the first time, tearing the hot, red morsels with his delicate fingers in a kind of wild greed,' but such passages are rare. Asceticism is the keynote of Mr. Pater's prose; at times it is almost too severe in its self-control and makes us long for a little more freedom. For indeed, the danger of such prose as his is that it is apt to become somewhat laborious. Here and there, one is tempted to say of Mr. Pater that he is 'a seeker after something in language, that is there in no satisfying measure, or not at all.' The continual preoccupation with phrase and epithet has its drawbacks as well as its virtues. And yet, when all is said, what wonderful prose it is, with its subtle preferences, its fastidious purity, its rejection of what is common or ordinary! Mr. Pater has the true spirit of selection, the true tact of omission. If he be not among the greatest prose writers of our literature he is, at least, our greatest artist in prose; and though it may be admitted that the best style is that which seems an unconscious result rather than a conscious aim, still in these latter days when violent rhetoric does duty for eloquence and vulgarity usurps the name of nature, we should be grateful for a style that deliberately aims at perfection of form, that seeks to produce its effect by artistic means and sets before itself an ideal of grave and chastened beauty.

Imaginary Portraits. By Walter Pater, M.A., Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford. (Macmillan and Co.)

REVIEWS

A GOOD HISTORICAL NOVEL

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, August 8, 1887.)

MOST modern Russian novelists look upon the historical novel as a *faux genre*, or a sort of fancy dress ball in literature, a mere puppet show, not a true picture of life. Yet their own history is full of such wonderful scenes and situations, ready for dramatist or novelist to treat of, that we are not surprised that, in spite of the dogmas of the *école naturaliste*, Mr. Stephen Coleridge has taken the Russia of the sixteenth century as the background for his strange tale. Indeed, there is much to be said in favour of a form remote from actual experience. Passion itself gains something from picturesqueness of surroundings; distance of time, unlike distance of space, makes objects larger and more vivid; over the common things of contemporary life there hangs a mist of familiarity that often makes their meaning obscure. There are also moments when we feel that but little artistic pleasure is to be gained from the study of the modern realistic school. Its works are powerful but they are painful, and after a time we tire of their harshness, their violence and their crudity. They exaggerate the importance of facts and underrate the importance of fiction. Such, at any rate, is the mood—and what is criticism itself but a mood?—produced in us by a perusal of Mr. Coleridge's *Demetrius*. It is the story of a young lad of unknown parentage who is brought up in the household of a Polish noble. He is a tall, fair-looking youth, by name Alexis, with a pride of bearing and grace of manner that

A GOOD HISTORICAL NOVEL

seem strange in one of such low station. Suddenly he is recognised by an exiled Russian noble as Demetrius, the son of Ivan the Terrible who was supposed to have been murdered by the usurper Boris. His identity is still further established by a strange cross of seven emeralds that he wears round his neck, and by a Greek inscription in his book of prayers which discloses the secret of his birth and the story of his rescue. He himself feels that the blood of kings beats in his veins, and appeals to the nobles of the Polish Diet to espouse his cause. By his passionate utterance he makes them acknowledge him as the true Tsar and invades Russia at the head of a large army. The people throng to him from every side, and Marfa, the widow of Ivan the Terrible, escapes from the convent in which she has been immured by Boris and comes to meet her son. At first she seems not to recognise him, but the music of his voice and the wonderful eloquence of his pleading win her over, and she embraces him in presence of the army and admits him to be her child. The usurper, terrified at the tidings, and deserted by his soldiers, commits suicide, and Alexis enters Moscow in triumph, and is crowned in the Kremlin. Yet he is not the true Demetrius, after all. He is deceived himself and he deceives others. Mr. Coleridge has drawn his character with delicate subtlety and quick insight, and the scene in which he discovers that he is no son of Ivan's and has no right to the name he claims, is exceedingly powerful and dramatic. One point of resemblance does exist between Alexis and the real Demetrius. Both of them are murdered, and with the death of this strange hero Mr. Coleridge ends his remarkable story.

REVIEWS

On the whole, Mr. Coleridge has written a really good historical novel and may be congratulated on his success. The style is particularly interesting, and the narrative parts of the book are deserving of high praise for their clearness, dignity and sobriety. The speeches and passages of dialogue are not so fortunate, as they have an awkward tendency to lapse into bad blank verse. Here, for instance, is a speech printed by Mr. Coleridge as prose, in which the true music of prose is sacrificed to a false metrical system which is at once monotonous and tiresome :

But Death, who brings us freedom from all falsehood,
Who heals the heart when the physician fails,
Who comforts all whom life cannot console,
Who stretches out in sleep the tired watchers ;
He takes the King and proves him but a beggar !
He speaks, and we, deaf to our Maker's voice,
Hear and obey the call of our destroyer !
Then let us murmur not at anything ;
For if our ills are curable, 'tis idle,
And if they are past remedy, 'tis vain.
The worst our strongest enemy can do
Is take from us our life, and this indeed
Is in the power of the weakest also.

This is not good prose ; it is merely blank verse of an inferior quality, and we hope that Mr. Coleridge in his next novel will not ask us to accept second-rate poetry as musical prose. For, that Mr. Coleridge is a young writer of great ability and culture cannot be doubted and, indeed, in spite of the error we have pointed out, *Demetrius* remains one of the most fascinating and delightful novels that has appeared this season.

Demetrius. By the Hon. Stephen Coleridge. (Kegan Paul.)

NEW NOVELS

NEW NOVELS

(*Saturday Review*, August 20, 1887.)

TEUTONIC fiction, as a rule, is somewhat heavy and very sentimental; but Werner's *Her Son*, excellently translated by Miss Tyrrell, is really a capital story and would make a capital play. Old Count Steinrück has two grandsons, Raoul and Michael. The latter is brought up like a peasant's child, cruelly treated by his grandfather and by the peasant to whose care he is confided, his mother, the Countess Louis Steinrück, having married an adventurer and a gambler. He is the rough hero of the tale, the Saint Michael of that war with evil which is life; while Raoul, spoiled by his grandfather and his French mother, betrays his country and tarnishes his name. At every step in the narrative these two young men come into collision. There is a war of character, a clash of personalities. Michael is proud, stern and noble. Raoul is weak, charming and evil. Michael has the world against him and conquers. Raoul has the world on his side and loses. The whole story is full of movement and life, and the psychology of the characters is displayed by action not by analysis, by deeds not by description. Though there are three long volumes, we do not tire of the tale. It has truth, passion and power, and there are no better things than these in fiction.

The interest of Mr. Sale Lloyd's *Scamp* depends on one of those misunderstandings which is the stock-in-trade of second-rate novelists. Captain Egerton falls in love with Miss Adela Thorndyke, who is a sort of feeble echo of some of Miss Broughton's heroines, but will not marry her because he has seen

REVIEWS

her talking with a young man who lives in the neighbourhood and is one of his oldest friends. We are sorry to say that Miss Thorndyke remains quite faithful to Captain Egerton, and goes so far as to refuse for his sake the rector of the parish, a local baronet, and a real live lord. There are endless pages of five o'clock tea-prattle and a good many tedious characters. Such novels as *Scamp* are possibly more easy to write than they are to read.

James Hepburn belongs to a very different class of book. It is not a mere chaos of conversation, but a strong story of real life, and it cannot fail to give Miss Veitch a prominent position among modern novelists. James Hepburn is the Free Church minister of Moss-giel, and presides over a congregation of pleasant sinners and serious hypocrites. Two people interest him, Lady Ellinor Farquharson and a handsome young vagabond called Robert Blackwood. Through his efforts to save Lady Ellinor from shame and ruin he is accused of being her lover; through his intimacy with Robert Blackwood he is suspected of having murdered a young girl in his household. A meeting of the elders and office-bearers of the church is held to consider the question of the minister's resignation, at which, to the amazement of every one, Robert Blackwood comes forth and confesses to the crime of which Hepburn is accused. The whole story is exceedingly powerful, and there is no extravagant use of the Scotch dialect, which is a great advantage to the reader.

The title-page of *Tiff* informs us that it was written by the author of *Lucy; or, a Great Mistake*, which seems to us a form of anonymity, as we have never heard of the novel in question. We hope, however, that it was better than *Tiff*, for *Tiff* is undeniably tedious.

TWO BIOGRAPHIES OF KEATS

It is the story of a beautiful girl who has many lovers and loses them, and of an ugly girl who has one lover and keeps him. It is a rather confused tale, and there are far too many love-scenes in it. If this 'Favourite Fiction' Series, in which *Tiff* appears, is to be continued, we would entreat the publisher to alter the type and the binding. The former is far too small: while, as for the cover, it is of sham crocodile leather adorned with a blue spider and a vulgar illustration of the heroine in the arms of a young man in evening dress. Dull as *Tiff* is—and its dulness is quite remarkable—it does not deserve so detestable a binding.

(1) *Her Son*. Translated from the German of E. Werner by Christina Tyrrell. (Richard Bentley and Son.)

(2) *Scamp*. By J. Sale Lloyd. (White and Co.)

(3) *James Hepburn*. By Sophie Veitch. (Alexander Gardner.)

(4) *Tiff*. By the Author of *Lucy*; or, *A Great Mistake*. 'Favourite Fiction' Series. (William Stevens.)

TWO BIOGRAPHIES OF KEATS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, September 27, 1887.)

A POET, said Keats once, 'is the most unpoetical of all God's creatures,' and whether the aphorism be universally true or not, this is certainly the impression produced by the two last biographies that have appeared of Keats himself. It cannot be said that either Mr. Colvin or Mr. William Rossetti makes us love Keats more or understand him better. In both these books there is much that is like 'chaff in the mouth,' and in Mr. Rossetti's there is not a little that is like 'brass on the palate.' To a certain degree this is, no doubt, inevitable nowadays. Everybody pays a penalty for peeping through keyholes,

REVIEWS

and the keyhole and the backstairs are essential parts of the method of the modern biographers. It is only fair, however, to state at the outset that Mr. Colvin has done his work much better than Mr. Rossetti. The account Mr. Colvin gives of Keats's boyhood, for instance, is very pleasing, and so is the sketch of Keats's circle of friends, both Leigh Hunt and Haydon being admirably drawn. Here and there, trivial family details are introduced without much regard to proportion, and the posthumous panegyrics of devoted friends are not really of so much value, in helping us to form any true estimate of Keats's actual character, as Mr. Colvin seems to imagine. We have no doubt that when Bailey wrote to Lord Houghton that common-sense and gentleness were Keats's two special characteristics the worthy Archdeacon meant extremely well, but we prefer the real Keats, with his passionate wilfulness, his fantastic moods and his fine inconsistency. Part of Keats's charm as a man is his fascinating incompleteness. We do not want him reduced to a sand-paper smoothness or made perfect by the addition of popular virtues. Still, if Mr. Colvin has not given us a very true picture of Keats's character, he has certainly told the story of his life in a pleasant and readable manner. He may not write with the ease and grace of a man of letters, but he is never pretentious and not often pedantic.

Mr. Rossetti's book is a great failure. To begin with, Mr. Rossetti commits the great mistake of separating the man from the artist. The facts of Keats's life are interesting only when they are shown in their relation to his creative activity. The moment they are isolated they are either uninteresting or painful. Mr. Rossetti complains that the early part of Keats's life is uneventful and the latter part

TWO BIOGRAPHIES OF KEATS

depressing, but the fault lies with the biographer, not with the subject.

The book opens with a detailed account of Keats's life, in which he spares us nothing, from what he calls the 'sexual misadventure at Oxford' down to the six weeks' dissipation after the appearance of the *Blackwood* article and the hysterical and morbid ravings of the dying man. No doubt, most if not all of the things Mr. Rossetti tells us are facts; but there is neither tact shown in the selection that is made of the facts nor sympathy in the use to which they are put. When Mr. Rossetti writes of the man he forgets the poet, and when he criticises the poet he shows that he does not understand the man. His first error, as we have said, is isolating the life from the work; his second error is his treatment of the work itself. Take, for instance, his criticism of that wonderful *Ode to a Nightingale*, with all its marvellous magic of music, colour and form. He begins by saying that 'the first point of weakness' in the poem is the 'surfeit of mythological allusions,' a statement which is absolutely untrue, as out of the eight stanzas of the poem only three contain any mythological allusions at all, and of these not one is either forced or remote. Then coming to the second verse,

Oh for a draught of vintage, that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delvèd earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country-green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!

Mr. Rossetti exclaims in a fine fit of 'Blue Ribbon' enthusiasm: 'Surely nobody wants wine as a preparation for enjoying a nightingale's music, whether in a literal or in a fanciful relation'! 'To call wine "the true, the blushful Hippocrene" . . . seems' to him 'both stilted and repulsive'; 'the phrase "with

REVIEWS

beaded bubbles winking at the brim" is (though picturesque) trivial'; 'the succeeding image, "Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards"' is 'far worse'; while such an expression as 'light-winged Dryad of the trees' is an obvious pleonasm, for Dryad really means *Oak-nymph*! As for that superb burst of passion,

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:

Mr. Rossetti tells us that it is a palpable, or rather 'palpable (*sic*) fact that this address . . . is a logical solecism,' as men live longer than nightingales. As Mr. Colvin makes very much the same criticism, talking of 'a breach of logic which is also . . . a flaw in the poetry,' it may be worth while to point out to these two last critics of Keats's work that what Keats meant to convey was the contrast between the permanence of beauty and the change and decay of human life, an idea which receives its fullest expression in the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. Nor do the other poems fare much better at Mr. Rossetti's hands. The fine invocation in *Isabella*—

Moan hither, all ye syllables of woe,
From the deep throat of sad Melpomene!
Through bronzed lyre in tragic order go,
And touch the strings into a mystery,

seems to him 'a *fadeur*'; the Indian Bacchante of the fourth book of *Endymion* he calls a 'sentimental and beguiling wine-bibber,' and, as for Endymion himself, he declares that he cannot understand 'how his human organism, *with respirative and digestive processes*, continues to exist,' and gives us his own idea of how Keats should have treated the subject. An

TWO BIOGRAPHIES OF KEATS

eminent French critic once exclaimed in despair, '*Je trouve des physiologistes partout !*'; but it has been reserved for Mr. Rossetti to speculate on Endymion's digestion, and we readily accord to him all the distinction of the position. Even where Mr. Rossetti seeks to praise, he spoils what he praises. To speak of *Hyperion* as 'a monument of Cyclopean architecture in verse' is bad enough, but to call it 'a Stonehenge of reverberance' is absolutely detestable; nor do we learn much about *The Eve of St. Mark* by being told that its 'simplicity is full-blooded as well as quaint.' What is the meaning, also, of stating that Keats's *Notes on Shakespeare* are 'somewhat strained and bloated'? and is there nothing better to be said of Madeline in *The Eve of St. Agnes* than that 'she is made a very charming and loveable figure, *although she does nothing very particular except to undress without looking behind her, and to elope*'? There is no necessity to follow Mr. Rossetti any further as he flounders about through the quagmire that he has made for his own feet. A critic who can say that 'not many of Keats's poems are highly admirable' need not be too seriously treated. Mr. Rossetti is an industrious man and a painstaking writer, but he entirely lacks the temper necessary for the interpretation of such poetry as was written by John Keats.

It is pleasant to turn again to Mr. Colvin, who criticises always with modesty and often with acumen. We do not agree with him when he accepts Mrs. Owens's theory of a symbolic and allegoric meaning underlying *Endymion*, his final judgment on Keats as 'the most Shakspearean spirit that has lived since Shakspeare' is not very fortunate, and we are surprised to find him suggesting, on the evidence of a rather silly story of Severn's, that Sir Walter Scott was privy to

REVIEWS

the *Blackwood* article. There is nothing, however, about his estimate of the poet's work that is harsh, irritating or uncouth. The true Marcellus of English song has not yet found his Virgil, but Mr. Colvin makes a tolerable Statius.

(1) *Keats*. By Sidney Colvin. 'English Men of Letters' Series. (Macmillan and Co.)

(2) *Life of John Keats*. By William Michael Rossetti. 'Great Writers' Series. (Walter Scott.)

A SCOTCHMAN ON SCOTTISH POETRY

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, October 24, 1887.)

A DISTINGUISHED living critic, born south of the Tweed, once whispered in confidence to a friend that he believed that the Scotch knew really very little about their own national literature. He quite admitted that they love their 'Robbie Burns' and their 'Sir Walter' with a patriotic enthusiasm that makes them extremely severe upon any unfortunate southron who ventures to praise either in their presence, but he claimed that the works of such great national poets as Dunbar, Henryson and Sir David Lyndsay are sealed books to the majority of the reading public in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow, and that few Scotch people have any idea of the wonderful outburst of poetry that took place in their country during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, at a time when there was little corresponding development in England. Whether this terrible accusation be absolutely true, or not, it is needless to discuss at present. It is probable that the archaism of language alone will always prevent a poet like Dunbar from being popular in the ordinary acceptance of the word. Professor Veitch's book, however,

A SCOTCHMAN ON SCOTTISH POETRY

shows that there are some, at any rate, in the 'land o' cakes' who can admire and appreciate their marvellous early singers, and whose admiration for *The Lord of the Isles* and the verses *To a Mountain Daisy* does not blind them to the exquisite beauties of *The Testament of Cresseid*, *The Thistle and the Rose*, and the *Dialog betwix Experience and ane Courteour*.

Taking as the subject of his two interesting volumes the feeling for Nature in Scottish Poetry, Professor Veitch starts with a historical disquisition on the growth of the sentiment in humanity. The primitive state he regards as being simply a sort of 'open-air feeling.' The chief sources of pleasure are the warmth of the sunshine, the cool of the breeze and the general fresh aspect of the earth and sky, connecting itself with a consciousness of life and sensuous enjoyment; while darkness, storm and cold are regarded as repulsive. This is followed by the pastoral stage in which we find the love of green meadows and of shady trees and of all things that make life pleasant and comfortable. This, again, by the stage of agriculture, the era of the war with earth, when men take pleasure in the cornfield and in the garden, but hate everything that is opposed to tillage, such as woodland and rock, or that cannot be subdued to utility, such as mountain and sea. Finally we come to the pure nature-feeling, the free delight in the mere contemplation of the external world, the joy in sense-impressions irrespective of all questions of Nature's utility and beneficence. But here the growth does not stop. The Greek, desiring to make Nature one with humanity, peopled the grove and hillside with beautiful and fantastic forms, saw the god hiding in the thicket, and the naiad drifting with the stream. The modern Words-

REVIEWS

worthian, desiring to make man one with Nature, finds in external things 'the symbols of our inner life, the workings of a spirit akin to our own.' There is much that is suggestive in these early chapters of Professor Veitch's book, but we cannot agree with him in the view he takes of the primitive attitude towards Nature. The 'open-air feeling,' of which he talks, seems to us comparatively modern. The earliest Nature-myths tell us, not of man's 'sensuous enjoyment' of Nature, but of the terror that Nature inspires. Nor are darkness and storm regarded by the primitive man as 'simply repulsive'; they are to him divine and supernatural things, full of wonder and full of awe. Some reference, also, should have been made to the influence of towns on the development of the nature-feeling, for, paradox though it may seem, it is none the less true that it is largely to the creation of cities that we owe the love of the country.

Professor Veitch is on a safer ground when he comes to deal with the growth and manifestations of this feeling as displayed in Scotch poetry. The early singers, as he points out, had all the mediæval love of gardens, all the artistic delight in the bright colours of flowers and the pleasant song of birds, but they felt no sympathy for the wild solitary moorland, with its purple heather, its grey rocks and its waving bracken. Montgomerie was the first to wander out on the banks and braes and to listen to the music of the burns, and it was reserved for Drummond of Hawthornden to sing of flood and forest and to notice the beauty of the mists on the hillside and the snow on the mountain tops. Then came Allan Ramsay with his honest homely pastorals; Thomson, who writes about

A SCOTCHMAN ON SCOTTISH POETRY

Nature like an eloquent auctioneer, and yet was a keen observer, with a fresh eye and an open heart; Beattie, who approached the problems that Wordsworth afterwards solved; the great Celtic epic of Ossian, such an important factor in the romantic movement of Germany and France; Fergusson, to whom Burns is so much indebted; Burns himself, Leyden, Sir Walter Scott, James Hogg and (*longo intervallo*) Christopher North and the late Professor Shairp. On nearly all these poets Professor Veitch writes with fine judgment and delicate feeling, and even his admiration for Burns has nothing absolutely aggressive about it. He shows, however, a certain lack of the true sense of literary proportion in the amount of space he devotes to the two last writers on our list. Christopher North was undoubtedly an interesting personality to the Edinburgh of his day, but he has not left behind him anything of real permanent value. There was too much noise in his criticism, too little music in his poetry. As for Professor Shairp, looked on as a critic he was a tragic example of the unfortunate influence of Wordsworth, for he was always confusing ethical with æsthetical questions, and never had the slightest idea how to approach such poets as Shelley and Rossetti whom it was his mission to interpret to young Oxford in his later years;¹ while, considered as a poet, he deserves hardly more than a passing reference. Professor Veitch gravely tells us that one of the descriptions of *Kilmahoe* is 'not surpassed in the language for real presence, felicity of epithet, and purity of reproduction,' and statements of this kind serve to remind us of the fact that a criticism which is based

¹ Shairp was Professor of Poetry at Oxford in Wilde's undergraduate days.

REVIEWS

on patriotism is always provincial in its result. But it is only fair to add that it is very rarely that Professor Veitch is so extravagant and so grotesque. His judgment and taste are, as a rule, excellent, and his book is, on the whole, a very fascinating and delightful contribution to the history of literature.

The Feeling for Nature in Scottish Poetry. By John Veitch, Professor of Logic and Rhetoric in the University of Glasgow. (Blackwood and Son.)

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

I

(*Woman's World*, November 1887.)

THE Princess Christian's translation of the *Memoirs of Wilhelmine, Margravine of Baireuth*, is a most fascinating and delightful book. The Margravine and her brother, Frederick the Great, were, as the Princess herself points out in an admirably written introduction, 'among the first of those questioning minds that strove after spiritual freedom' in the last century. 'They had studied,' says the Princess, 'the English philosophers, Newton, Locke, and Shaftesbury, and were roused to enthusiasm by the writings of Voltaire and Rousseau. Their whole lives bore the impress of the influence of French thought on the burning questions of the day. In the eighteenth century began that great struggle of philosophy against tyranny and worn-out abuses which culminated in the French Revolution. The noblest minds were engaged in the struggle, and, like most reformers, they pushed their conclusions to extremes, and too often lost sight of the need of a due proportion in things. The Margravine's influence on the intellectual development of her

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

country is untold. She formed at Baireuth a centre of culture and learning which had before been undreamt of in Germany.

The historical value of these *Memoirs* is, of course, well known. Carlyle speaks of them as being 'by far the best authority' on the early life of Frederick the Great. But considered merely as the autobiography of a clever and charming woman, they are no less interesting, and even those who care nothing for eighteenth-century politics, and look upon history itself as an unattractive form of fiction, cannot fail to be fascinated by the Margravine's wit, vivacity and humour, by her keen powers of observation, and by her brilliant and assertive egotism. Not that her life was by any means a happy one. Her father, to quote the Princess Christian, 'ruled his family with the same harsh despotism with which he ruled his country, taking pleasure in making his power felt by all in the most galling manner,' and the Margravine and her brother 'had much to suffer, not only from his ungovernable temper, but also from the real privations to which they were subjected.' Indeed, the picture the Margravine gives of the King is quite extraordinary. 'He despised all learning,' she writes, 'and wished me to occupy myself with nothing but needlework and household duties or details. Had he found me writing or reading, he would probably have whipped me.' He 'considered music a capital offence, and maintained that every one should devote himself to one object: men to the military service, and women to their household duties. Science and the arts he counted among the "seven deadly sins."' Sometimes he took to religion, 'and then,' says the Margravine, 'we lived like Trappists, to the great grief of my brother

REVIEWS

and myself. Every afternoon the King preached a sermon, to which we had to listen as attentively as if it proceeded from an Apostle. My brother and I were often seized with such an intense sense of the ridiculous that we burst out laughing, upon which an apostolic curse was poured out on our heads, which we had to accept with a show of humility and penitence.' Economy and soldiers were his only topics of conversation; his chief social amusement was to make his guests intoxicated; and as for his temper, the accounts the Margravine gives of it would be almost incredible if they were not amply corroborated from other sources. Suetonius has written of the strange madness that comes on kings, but even in his melodramatic chronicles there is hardly anything that rivals what the Margravine has to tell us. Here is one of her pictures of family life at a Royal Court in the last century, and it is not by any means the worst scene she describes:

On one occasion, when his temper was more than usually bad, he told the Queen that he had received letters from Anspach, in which the Margrave announced his arrival at Berlin for the beginning of May. He was coming there for the purpose of marrying my sister, and one of his ministers would arrive previously with the betrothal ring. My father asked my sister whether she were pleased at this prospect, and how she would arrange her household. Now my sister had always made a point of telling him whatever came into her head, even the greatest home-truths, and he had never taken her outspokenness amiss. On this occasion, therefore, relying on former experience, she answered him as follows: 'When I have a house of my own, I shall take care to have a well-appointed dinner-table, better than yours is, and if I have children of my own, I shall not plague them as you do yours, and force them to eat things they thoroughly dislike!'

'What is amiss with my dinner-table?' the King enquired, getting very red in the face.

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

‘You ask what is the matter with it,’ my sister replied; ‘there is not enough on it for us to eat, and what there is is cabbage and carrots, which we detest.’ Her first answer had already angered my father, but now he gave vent to his fury. But instead of punishing my sister he poured it all on my mother, my brother, and myself. To begin with he threw his plate at my brother’s head, who would have been struck had he not got out of the way; a second one he threw at me, which I also happily escaped; then torrents of abuse followed these first signs of hostility. He reproached the Queen with having brought up her children so badly. ‘You will curse your mother,’ he said to my brother, ‘for having made you such a good-for-nothing creature.’ . . . As my brother and I passed near him to leave the room, he hit out at us with his crutch. Happily we escaped the blow, for it would certainly have struck us down, and we at last escaped without harm.

Yet, as the Princess Christian remarks, ‘despite the almost cruel treatment Wilhelmine received from her father, it is noticeable that throughout her memoirs she speaks of him with the greatest affection. She makes constant reference to his “good heart”’; and says that his faults ‘were more those of temper than of nature.’ Nor could all the misery and wretchedness of her home life dull the brightness of her intellect. What would have made others morbid, made her satirical. Instead of weeping over her own personal tragedies, she laughs at the general comedy of life. Here, for instance, is her description of Peter the Great and his wife, who arrived at Berlin in 1718:

The Czarina was small, broad, and brown-looking, without the slightest dignity or appearance. You had only to look at her to detect her low origin. She might have passed for a German actress, she had decked herself out in such a manner. Her dress had been bought second-hand, and was trimmed with some dirty looking silver embroidery; the bodice was trimmed with precious stones, arranged in such a

REVIEWS

manner as to represent the double eagle. She wore a dozen orders; and round the bottom of her dress hung quantities of relics and pictures of saints, which rattled when she walked, and reminded one of a smartly harnessed mule. The orders too made a great noise, knocking against each other.

The Czar, on the other hand, was tall and well grown, with a handsome face, but his expression was coarse, and impressed one with fear. He wore a simple sailor's dress. His wife, who spoke German very badly, called her court jester to her aid, and spoke Russian with her. This poor creature was a Princess Gallizin, who had been obliged to undertake this sorry office to save her life, as she had been mixed up in a conspiracy against the Czar, and had twice been flogged with the knout!

The following day [the Czar] visited all the sights of Berlin, amongst others the very curious collection of coins and antiques. Amongst these last named was a statue, representing a heathen god. It was anything but attractive, but was the most valuable in the collection. The Czar admired it very much, and insisted on the Czarina kissing it. On her refusing, he said to her in bad German that she should lose her head if she did not at once obey him. Being terrified at the Czar's anger she immediately complied with his orders without the least hesitation. The Czar asked the King to give him this and other statues, a request which he could not refuse. The same thing happened about a cupboard, inlaid with amber. It was the only one of its kind, and had cost King Frederick I. an enormous sum, and the consternation was general on its having to be sent to Petersburg.

This barbarous Court happily left after two days. The Queen rushed at once to Monbijou, which she found in a state resembling that of the fall of Jerusalem. I never saw such a sight. Everything was destroyed, so that the Queen was obliged to rebuild the whole house.

Nor are the Margravine's descriptions of her reception as a bride in the principality of Baireuth less amusing. Hof was the first town she came to, and a deputation of nobles was waiting

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

there to welcome her. This is her account of them :

Their faces would have frightened little children, and, to add to their beauty, they had arranged their hair to resemble the wigs that were then in fashion. Their dresses clearly denoted the antiquity of their families, as they were composed of heirlooms, and were cut accordingly, so that most of them did not fit. In spite of their costumes being the 'Court Dresses,' the gold and silver trimmings were so black that you had a difficulty in making out of what they were made. The manners of these nobles suited their faces and their clothes. They might have passed for peasants. I could scarcely restrain my laughter when I first beheld these strange figures. I spoke to each in turn, but none of them understood what I said, and their replies sounded to me like Hebrew, because the dialect of the Empire is quite different from that spoken in Brandenburg.

The clergy also presented themselves. These were totally different creatures. Round their necks they wore great ruffs, which resembled washing baskets. They spoke very slowly, so that I might be able to understand them better. They said the most foolish things, and it was only with much difficulty that I was able to prevent myself from laughing. At last I got rid of all these people, and we sat down to dinner. I tried my best to converse with those at table, but it was useless. At last I touched on agricultural topics, and then they began to thaw. I was at once informed of all their different farmsteads and herds of cattle. An almost interesting discussion took place as to whether the oxen in the upper part of the country were fatter than those in the lowlands.

I was told that as the next day was Sunday, I must spend it at Hof, and listen to a sermon. Never before had I heard such a sermon! The clergyman began by giving us an account of all the marriages that had taken place from Adam's time to that of Noah. We were spared no detail, so that the gentlemen all laughed and the poor ladies blushed. The dinner went off as on the previous day. In the afternoon all the ladies came to pay me their respects. Gracious heavens! What ladies, too! They were all as ugly as the gentlemen, and their

REVIEWS

head-dresses were so curious that swallows might have built their nests in them.

As for Baireuth itself, and its petty Court, the picture she gives of it is exceedingly curious. Her father-in-law, the reigning Margrave, was a narrow-minded mediocrity, whose conversation 'resembled that of a sermon read aloud for the purpose of sending the listener to sleep,' and he had only two topics, Telemachus, and Amelot de la Houssaye's *Roman History*. The Ministers, from Baron von Stein, who always said 'yes' to everything, to Baron von Voit, who always said 'no,' were not by any means an intellectual set of men. 'Their chief amusement,' says the Margravine, 'was drinking from morning till night,' and horses and cattle were all they talked about. The palace itself was shabby, decayed and dirty. 'I was like a lamb among wolves,' cries the poor Margravine; 'I was settled in a strange country, at a Court which more resembled a peasant's farm, surrounded by coarse, bad, dangerous, and tiresome people.'

Yet her *esprit* never deserted her. She is always clever, witty, and entertaining. Her stories about the endless squabbles over precedence are extremely amusing. The society of her day cared very little for good manners, knew, indeed, very little about them, but all questions of etiquette were of vital importance, and the Margravine herself, though she saw the shallowness of the whole system, was far too proud not to assert her rights when circumstances demanded it, as the description she gives of her visit to the Empress of Germany shows very clearly. When this meeting was first proposed, the Margravine declined positively to entertain the idea. 'There was no precedent,' she writes, 'of a King's

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

daughter and the Empress having met, and I did not know to what rights I ought to lay claim.' Finally, however, she is induced to consent, but she lays down three conditions for her reception :

I desired first of all that the Empress's Court should receive me at the foot of the stairs, secondly, that she should meet me at the door of her bedroom, and, thirdly, that she should offer me an armchair to sit on.

They disputed all day over the conditions I had made. The two first were granted me, but all that could be obtained with respect to the third was, that the Empress would use quite a small armchair, whilst she gave me a chair.

Next day I saw this Royal personage. I own that had I been in her place I would have made all the rules of etiquette and ceremony the excuse for not being obliged to appear. The Empress was small and stout, round as a ball, very ugly, and without dignity or manner. Her mind corresponded to her body. She was terribly bigoted, and spent her whole day praying. The old and ugly are generally the Almighty's portion. She received me trembling all over, and was so upset that she could not say a word.

After some silence I began the conversation in French. She answered me in her Austrian dialect that she could not speak in that language, and begged I would speak in German. The conversation did not last long, for the Austrian and low Saxon tongues are so different from each other that to those acquainted with only one the other is unintelligible. This is what happened to us. A third person would have laughed at our misunderstandings, for we caught only a word here and there, and had to guess the rest. The poor Empress was such a slave to etiquette that she would have thought it high treason had she spoken to me in a foreign language, though she understood French quite well.

Many other extracts might be given from this delightful book, but from the few that have been selected some idea can be formed of the vivacity and picturesqueness of the Margravine's style. As for

REVIEWS

her character, it is very well summed up by the Princess Christian, who, while admitting that she often appears almost heartless and inconsiderate, yet claims that, 'taken as a whole, she stands out in marked prominence among the most gifted women of the eighteenth century, not only by her mental powers, but by her goodness of heart, her self-sacrificing devotion, and true friendship.' An interesting sequel to her *Memoirs* would be her correspondence with Voltaire, and it is to be hoped that we may shortly see a translation of these letters from the same accomplished pen to which we owe the present volume.¹

Women's Voices is an anthology of the most characteristic poems by English, Scotch and Irish women, selected and arranged by Mrs. William Sharp. 'The idea of making this anthology,' says Mrs. Sharp, in her preface, 'arose primarily from the conviction that our women-poets had never been collectively represented with anything like adequate justice; that the works of many are not so widely known as they deserve to be; and that at least some fine fugitive poetry could be thus rescued from oblivion'; and Mrs. Sharp proceeds to claim that the 'selections will further emphasise the value of women's work in poetry for those who are already well acquainted with English Literature, and that they will convince many it is as possible to form an anthology of "pure poetry" from the writings of women as from those of men.' It is somewhat difficult to define what 'pure poetry' really is, but the collection is certainly extremely interesting, extending, as it does, over nearly three centuries of

¹ *The Margravine of Baireuth and Voltaire.* (David Stott, 1888.)

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

our literature. It opens with *Revenge*, a poem by the 'learned, virtuous, and truly noble Ladie,' Elizabeth Carew, who published a *Tragedie of Marian, the faire Queene of Iewry*, in 1613, from which *Revenge* is taken. Then come some very pretty verses by Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, who produced a volume of poems in 1653. They are supposed to be sung by a sea-goddess, and their fantastic charm and the graceful wilfulness of their fancy are well worthy of note, as these first stanzas show :

My cabinets are oyster-shells,
In which I keep my Orient pearls;
And modest coral I do wear,
Which blushes when it touches air.
On silvery waves I sit and sing,
And then the fish lie listening:
Then resting on a rocky stone
I comb my hair with fishes' bone;
The whilst Apollo with his beams
Doth dry my hair from soaking streams,
His light doth glaze the water's face,
And make the sea my looking-glass.

Then follow *Friendship's Mystery*, by 'The Matchless Orinda,' Mrs. Katherine Philips; *A Song*, by Mrs. Aphra Behn, 'the first English woman who adopted literature as a profession'; and the Countess of Winchelsea's *Nocturnal Reverie*. Wordsworth once said that, with the exception of this poem and Pope's *Windsor Forest*, 'the poetry of the period intervening between *Paradise Lost* and *The Seasons* does not contain a single new image of external nature,' and though the statement is hardly accurate, as it leaves Gay entirely out of account, it must be admitted that the simple naturalism of Lady Winchelsea's description is extremely remarkable. Passing on through Mrs. Sharp's collection,

REVIEWS

we come across poems by Lady Grisell Baillie ; by Jean Adams, a poor 'sewing-maid in a Scotch manse,' who died in the Greenock Workhouse ; by Isobel Pagan, 'an Ayrshire lucky, who kept an ale-house, and sold whiskey without a license,' 'and sang her own songs as a means of subsistence' ; by Mrs. Thrale, Dr. Johnson's friend ; by Mrs. Hunter, the wife of the great anatomist ; by the worthy Mrs. Barbauld ; and by the excellent Mrs. Hannah More. Here is Miss Anna Seward, 'called by her admirers "the Swan of Lichfield,"' who was so angry with Dr. Darwin for plagiarising some of her verses ; Lady Anne Barnard, whose *Auld Robin Gray* was described by Sir Walter Scott as 'worth all the dialogues Corydon and Phyllis have together spoken from the days of Theocritus downwards' ; Jean Glover, a Scottish weaver's daughter, who 'married a strolling player and became the best singer and actor of his troop' ; Joanna Baillie, whose tedious dramas thrilled our grandfathers ; Mrs. Tighe, whose *Psyche* was very much admired by Keats in his youthful days ; Frances Kemble, Mrs. Siddons's niece ; poor L. E. L., whom Disraeli described as 'the personification of Brompton, pink satin dress, white satin shoes, red cheeks, snub nose, and her hair à la Sappho' ; the two beautiful sisters, Lady Dufferin and Mrs. Norton ; Emily Brontë, whose poems are instinct with tragic power and quite terrible in their bitter intensity of passion, the fierce fire of feeling seeming almost to consume the raiment of form ; Eliza Cook, a kindly, vulgar writer ; George Eliot, whose poetry is too abstract, and lacks all rhythmical life ; Mrs. Carlyle, who wrote much better poetry than her husband, though this is hardly high praise ; and Mrs. Browning, the first really

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

great poetess in our literature. Nor are contemporary writers forgotten. Christina Rossetti, some of whose poems are quite priceless in their beauty; Mrs. Augusta Webster, Mrs. Hamilton King, Miss Mary Robinson, Mrs. Craik; Jean Ingelow, whose sonnet on *An Ancient Chess King* is like an exquisitely carved gem; Mrs. Pfeiffer; Miss May Probyn, a poetess with the true lyrical impulse of song, whose work is as delicate as it is delightful; Mrs. Nesbit, a very pure and perfect artist; Miss Rosa Mulholland, Miss Katharine Tynan, Lady Charlotte Elliot, and many other well-known writers, are duly and adequately represented. On the whole, Mrs. Sharp's collection is very pleasant reading indeed, and the extracts given from the works of living poetesses are extremely remarkable, not merely for their absolute artistic excellence, but also for the light they throw upon the spirit of modern culture.

It is not, however, by any means a complete anthology. Dame Juliana Berners is possibly too antiquated in style to be suitable to a modern audience. But where is Anne Askew, who wrote a ballad in Newgate; and where is Queen Elizabeth, whose 'most sweet and sententious ditty' on Mary Stuart is so highly praised by Puttenham as an example of 'Exargasia,' or *The Gorgeous in Literature*? Why is the Countess of Pembroke excluded? Sidney's sister should surely have a place in any anthology of English verse. Where is Sidney's niece, Lady Mary Wroth, to whom Ben Jonson dedicated *The Alchemist*? Where is 'the noble ladie Diana Primrose,' who wrote *A Chain of Pearl, or a memorial of the peerless graces and heroic virtues of Queen Elizabeth, of glorious memory*? Where is Mary Morpeth, the friend and admirer of Drum-

REVIEWS

mond of Hawthornden? Where is the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of James I., and where is Anne Killigrew, maid of honour to the Duchess of York? The Marchioness of Wharton, whose poems were praised by Waller; Lady Chudleigh, whose lines beginning—

Wife and servant are the same,
But only differ in the name,

are very curious and interesting; Rachel Lady Russell, Constantia Grierson, Mary Barber, Lætitia Pilkington; Eliza Haywood, whom Pope honoured by a place in *The Dunciad*; Lady Luxborough, Lord Bolingbroke's half-sister; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; Lady Temple, whose poems were printed by Horace Walpole; Perdita, whose lines on the snowdrop are very pathetic; the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, of whom Gibbon said that 'she was made for something better than a Duchess'; Mrs. Ratcliffe, Mrs. Chapone, and Amelia Opie, all deserve a place on historical, if not on artistic, grounds. In fact, the space given by Mrs. Sharp to modern and living poetesses is somewhat disproportionate, and I am sure that those on whose brows the laurels are still green would not grudge a little room to those the green of whose laurels is withered and the music of whose lyres is mute.

One of the most powerful and pathetic novels that has recently appeared is *A Village Tragedy* by Margaret L. Woods. To find any parallel to this lurid little story, one must go to Dostoieffski or to Guy de Maupassant. Not that Mrs. Woods can be said to have taken either of these two great masters of fiction as her model, but there is something in her work that recalls their method; she has not a

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

little of their fierce intensity, their terrible concentration, their passionless yet poignant objectivity; like them, she seems to allow life to suggest its own mode of presentation; and, like them, she recognises that a frank acceptance of the facts of life is the true basis of all modern imitative art. The scene of Mrs. Woods's story lies in one of the villages near Oxford; the characters are very few in number, and the plot is extremely simple. It is a romance of modern Arcadia—a tale of the love of a farm-labourer for a girl who, though slightly above him in social station and education, is yet herself also a servant on a farm. True Arcadians they are, both of them, and their ignorance and isolation serve only to intensify the tragedy that gives the story its title. It is the fashion nowadays to label literature, so, no doubt, Mrs. Woods's novel will be spoken of as 'realistic.' Its realism, however, is the realism of the artist, not of the reporter; its tact of treatment, subtlety of perception, and fine distinction of style, make it rather a poem than a *procès-verbal*; and though it lays bare to us the mere misery of life, it suggests something of life's mystery also. Very delicate, too, is the handling of external Nature. There are no formal guide-book descriptions of scenery, nor anything of what Byron petulantly called 'twaddling about trees,' but we seem to breathe the atmosphere of the country, to catch the exquisite scent of the beanfields, so familiar to all who have ever wandered through the Oxfordshire lanes in June; to hear the birds singing in the thicket, and the sheep-bells tinkling from the hill. Characterisation, that enemy of literary form, is such an essential part of the method of the modern writer of fiction, that Nature has almost become to the

REVIEWS

novelist what light and shade are to the painter—the one permanent element of style; and if the power of *A Village Tragedy* be due to its portrayal of human life, no small portion of its charm comes from its Theocritean setting.

It is, however, not merely in fiction and in poetry that the women of this century are making their mark. Their appearance amongst the prominent speakers at the Church Congress, some weeks ago, was in itself a very remarkable proof of the growing influence of women's opinions on all matters connected with the elevation of our national life, and the amelioration of our social conditions. When the Bishops left the platform to their wives, it may be said that a new era began, and the change will, no doubt, be productive of much good. The Apostolic dictum, that women should not be suffered to teach, is no longer applicable to a society such as ours, with its solidarity of interests, its recognition of natural rights, and its universal education, however suitable it may have been to the Greek cities under Roman rule. Nothing in the United States struck me more than the fact that the remarkable intellectual progress of that country is very largely due to the efforts of American women, who edit many of the most powerful magazines and newspapers, take part in the discussion of every question of public interest, and exercise an important influence upon the growth and tendencies of literature and art. Indeed, the women of America are the one class in the community that enjoys that leisure which is so necessary for culture. The men are, as a rule, so absorbed in business, that the task of bringing some element of form into the chaos of

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

daily life is left almost entirely to the opposite sex, and an eminent Bostonian once assured me that in the twentieth century the whole culture of his country would be in petticoats. By that time, however, it is probable that the dress of the two sexes will be assimilated, as similarity of costume always follows similarity of pursuits.

In a recent article in *La France*, M. Sarcey puts this point very well. The further we advance, he says, the more apparent does it become that women are to take their share as bread-winners in the world. The task is no longer monopolised by men, and will, perhaps, be equally shared by the sexes in another hundred years. It will be necessary, however, for women to invent a suitable costume, as their present style of dress is quite inappropriate to any kind of mechanical labour, and must be radically changed before they can compete with men upon their own ground. As to the question of desirability, M. Sarcey refuses to speak. 'I shall not see the end of this revolution,' he remarks, 'and I am glad of it.' But, as is pointed out in a very sensible article in the *Daily News*, there is no doubt that M. Sarcey has reason and common-sense on his side with regard to the absolute unsuitability of ordinary feminine attire to any sort of handicraft, or even to any occupation which necessitates a daily walk to business and back again in all kinds of weather. Women's dress can easily be modified and adapted to any exigencies of the kind; but most women refuse to modify or adapt it. They must follow the fashion, whether it be convenient or the reverse. And, after all, what is a fashion? From the artistic point of view, it is usually a form of ugliness so intolerable

REVIEWS

that we have to alter it every six months. From the point of view of science, it not unfrequently violates every law of health, every principle of hygiene. While from the point of view of simple ease and comfort, it is not too much to say that, with the exception of M. Félix's charming tea-gowns, and a few English tailor-made costumes, there is not a single form of really fashionable dress that can be worn without a certain amount of absolute misery to the wearer. The contortion of the feet of the Chinese beauty, said Dr. Naftel at the last International Medical Congress, held at Washington, is no more barbarous or unnatural than the panoply of the *femme du monde*.

And yet how sensible is the dress of the London milk-woman, of the Irish or Scotch fishwife, of the North-Country factory-girl! An attempt was made recently to prevent the pit-women from working, on the ground that their costume was unsuited to their sex, but it is really only the idle classes who dress badly. Wherever physical labour of any kind is required, the costume used is, as a rule, absolutely right, for labour necessitates freedom, and without freedom there is no such thing as beauty in dress at all. In fact, the beauty of dress depends on the beauty of the human figure, and whatever limits, constrains, and mutilates is essentially ugly, though the eyes of many are so blinded by custom that they do not notice the ugliness till it has become unfashionable.

What women's dress will be in the future it is difficult to say. The writer of the *Daily News* article is of opinion that skirts will always be worn as distinctive of the sex, and it is obvious that men's

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

dress, in its present condition, is not by any means an example of a perfectly rational costume. It is more than probable, however, that the dress of the twentieth century will emphasise distinctions of occupation, not distinctions of sex.

It is hardly too much to say that, by the death of the author of *John Halifax, Gentleman*, our literature has sustained a heavy loss. Mrs. Craik was one of the finest of our women-writers, and though her art had always what Keats called 'a palpable intention upon one,' still its imaginative qualities were of no mean order. There is hardly one of her books that has not some distinction of style; there is certainly not one of them that does not show an ardent love of all that is beautiful and good in life. The good she, perhaps, loved somewhat more than the beautiful, but her heart had room for both. Her first novel appeared in 1849, the year of the publication of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, and Mrs. Gaskell's *Ruth*, and her last work was done for the magazine which I have the honour to edit. She was very much interested in the scheme for the foundation of the *Woman's World*, suggested its title, and promised to be one of its warmest supporters. One article from her pen is already in proof and will appear next month, and in a letter I received from her, a few days before she died, she told me that she had almost finished a second, to be called *Between Schooldays and Marriage*. Few women have enjoyed a greater popularity than Mrs. Craik, or have better deserved it. It is sometimes said that John Halifax is not a real man, but only a woman's ideal of a man. Well, let us be grateful for such ideals. No one can read the story of which

REVIEWS

John Halifax is the hero without being the better for it. Mrs. Craik will live long in the affectionate memory of all who knew her, and one of her novels, at any rate, will always have a high and honourable place in English fiction. Indeed, for simple narrative power, some of the chapters of *John Halifax, Gentleman*, are almost unequalled in our prose literature.

The news of the death of Lady Brassey has been also received by the English people with every expression of sorrow and sympathy. Though her books were not remarkable for any perfection of literary style, they had the charm of brightness, vivacity, and unconventionality. They revealed a fascinating personality, and their touches of domesticity made them classics in many an English household. In all modern movements Lady Brassey took a keen interest. She gained a first-class certificate in the South Kensington School of Cookery, scullery department and all; was one of the most energetic members of the St. John's Ambulance Association, many branches of which she succeeded in founding; and, whether at Normanhurst or in Park Lane, always managed to devote some portion of her day to useful and practical work. It is sad to have to chronicle in the first number of the *Woman's World* the death of two of the most remarkable English-women of our day.

(1) *Memoirs of Wilhelmine Margravine of Baireuth*. Translated and edited by Her Royal Highness Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, Princess of Great Britain and Ireland. (David Stott.)

(2) *Women's Voices: An Anthology of the most Characteristic Poems by English, Scotch, and Irish Women*. Selected, edited, and arranged by Mrs. William Sharp. (Walter Scott.)

(3) *A Village Tragedy*. By Margaret L. Woods. (Bentley and Son.)

MR. MAHAFFY'S NEW BOOK

MR. MAHAFFY'S NEW BOOK

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, November 9, 1887.)

MR. MAHAFFY'S new book will be a great disappointment to everybody except the Paper-Unionists and the members of the Primrose League. His subject, the history of *Greek Life and Thought: from the Age of Alexander to the Roman Conquest*, is extremely interesting, but the manner in which the subject is treated is quite unworthy of a scholar, nor can there be anything more depressing than Mr. Mahaffy's continual efforts to degrade history to the level of the ordinary political pamphlet of contemporary party warfare. There is, of course, no reason why Mr. Mahaffy should be called upon to express any sympathy with the aspirations of the old Greek cities for freedom and autonomy. The personal preferences of modern historians on these points are matters of no import whatsoever. But in his attempts to treat the Hellenic world as 'Tipperary writ large,' to use Alexander the Great as a means of whitewashing Mr. Smith, and to finish the battle of Chæronæa on the plains of Mitchelstown, Mr. Mahaffy shows an amount of political bias and literary blindness that is quite extraordinary. He might have made his book a work of solid and enduring interest, but he has chosen to give it a merely ephemeral value and to substitute for the scientific temper of the true historian the prejudice, the flippancy, and the violence of the platform partisan. For the flippancy parallels can, no doubt, be found in some of Mr. Mahaffy's earlier books, but the prejudice and the violence are new, and their appearance is very much to be regretted. There is

REVIEWS

always something peculiarly impotent about the violence of a literary man. It seems to bear no reference to facts, for it is never kept in check by action. It is simply a question of adjectives and rhetoric, of exaggeration and over-emphasis. Mr. Balfour is very anxious that Mr. William O'Brien should wear prison clothes, sleep on a plank bed, and be subjected to other indignities, but Mr. Mahaffy goes far beyond such mild measures as these, and begins his history by frankly expressing his regret that Demosthenes was not summarily put to death for his attempt to keep the spirit of patriotism alive among the citizens of Athens! Indeed, he has no patience with what he calls 'the foolish and senseless opposition to Macedonia'; regards the revolt of the Spartans against 'Alexander's Lord Lieutenant for Greece' as an example of 'parochial politics'; indulges in Primrose League platitudes against a low franchise and the iniquity of allowing 'every pauper' to have a vote; and tells us that the 'demagogues' and 'pretended patriots' were so lost to shame that they actually preached to the parasitic mob of Athens the doctrine of autonomy—'not now extinct,' Mr. Mahaffy adds regretfully—and propounded, as a principle of political economy, the curious idea that people should be allowed to manage their own affairs! As for the personal character of the despots, Mr. Mahaffy admits that if he had to judge by the accounts in the Greek historians, from Herodotus downwards, he 'would certainly have said that the ineffaceable passion for autonomy, which marks every epoch of Greek history, and every canton within its limits, must have arisen from the excesses committed by the officers of foreign potentates, or local tyrants,'

MR. MAHAFFY'S NEW BOOK

but a careful study of the cartoons published in *United Ireland* has convinced him 'that a ruler may be the soberest, the most conscientious, the most considerate, and yet have terrible things said of him by mere political malcontents.' In fact, since Mr. Balfour has been caricatured, Greek history must be entirely re-written! This is the pass to which the distinguished professor of a distinguished university has been brought. Nor can anything equal Mr. Mahaffy's prejudice against the Greek patriots, unless it be his contempt for those few fine Romans who, sympathising with Hellenic civilisation and culture, recognised the political value of autonomy and the intellectual importance of a healthy national life. He mocks at what he calls their 'vulgar mawkishness about Greek liberties, their anxiety to redress historical wrongs,' and congratulates his readers that this feeling was not intensified by the remorse that their own forefathers had been the oppressors. Luckily, says Mr. Mahaffy, the old Greeks had conquered Troy, and so the pangs of conscience which now so deeply afflict a Gladstone and a Morley for the sins of their ancestors could hardly affect a Marcius or a Quinctius! It is quite unnecessary to comment on the silliness and bad taste of passages of this kind, but it is interesting to note that the facts of history are too strong even for Mr. Mahaffy. In spite of his sneers at the provinciality of national feeling and his vague panegyrics on cosmopolitan culture, he is compelled to admit that 'however patriotism may be superseded in stray individuals by larger benevolence, bodies of men who abandon it will only replace it by meaner motives,' and cannot help expressing his regret that the better classes among the Greek communities

REVIEWS

were so entirely devoid of public spirit that they squandered 'as idle absentees, or still idler residents, the time and means given them to benefit their country,' and failed to recognise their opportunity of founding a Hellenic Federal Empire. Even when he comes to deal with art, he cannot help admitting that the noblest sculpture of the time was that which expressed the spirit of the first great *national* struggle, the repulse of the Gallic hordes which overran Greece in 278 B.C., and that to the patriotic feeling evoked at this crisis we owe the *Belvedere Apollo*, the *Artemis* of the Vatican, the *Dying Gaul*, and the finest achievements of the Perganene school. In literature, also, Mr. Mahaffy is loud in his lamentations over what he considers to be the shallow society tendencies of the new comedy, and misses the fine freedom of Aristophanes, with his intense patriotism, his vital interest in politics, his large issues and his delight in vigorous national life. He confesses the decay of oratory under the blighting influences of imperialism, and the sterility of those pedantic disquisitions upon style which are the inevitable consequence of the lack of healthy subject-matter. Indeed, on the last page of his history Mr. Mahaffy makes a formal recantation of most of his political prejudices. He is still of opinion that Demosthenes should have been put to death for resisting the Macedonian invasion, but admits that the imperialism of Rome, which followed the imperialism of Alexander, produced incalculable mischief, beginning with intellectual decay, and ending with financial ruin. 'The touch of Rome,' he says, 'numbed Greece and Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor, and if there are great buildings attesting the splendour of the Empire, where are the signs of intel-

MR. MAHAFFY'S NEW BOOK

lectual and moral vigour, if we except that stronghold of nationality, the little land of Palestine?' This palinode is, no doubt, intended to give a plausible air of fairness to the book, but such a death-bed repentance comes too late, and makes the whole preceding history seem not fair but foolish.

It is a relief to turn to the few chapters that deal directly with the social life and thought of the Greeks. Here Mr. Mahaffy is very pleasant reading indeed. His account of the colleges at Athens and Alexandria, for instance, is extremely interesting, and so is his estimate of the schools of Zeno, of Epicurus, and of Pyrrho. Excellent, too, in many points is the description of the literature and art of the period. We do not agree with Mr. Mahaffy in his panegyric of the Laocoon, and we are surprised to find a writer, who is very indignant at what he considers to be the modern indifference to Alexandrine poetry, gravely stating that no study is 'more wearisome and profitless' than that of the *Greek Anthology*.

The criticism of the new comedy, also, seems to us somewhat pedantic. The aim of social comedy, in Menander no less than in Sheridan, is to mirror the manners, not to reform the morals, of its day, and the censure of the Puritan, whether real or affected, is always out of place in literary criticism, and shows a want of recognition of the essential distinction between art and life. After all, it is only the Philistine who thinks of blaming Jack Absolute for his deception, Bob Acres for his cowardice, and Charles Surface for his extravagance, and there is very little use in airing one's moral sense at the expense of one's artistic appreciation. Valuable, also, though modernity of expression

REVIEWS

undoubtedly is, still it requires to be used with tact and judgment. There is no objection to Mr. Mahaffy's describing Philopœmen as the Garibaldi, and Antigonus Doson as the Victor Emmanuel of his age. Such comparisons have, no doubt, a certain cheap popular value. But, on the other hand, a phrase like 'Greek Pre-Raphaelitism' is rather awkward; not much is gained by dragging in an allusion to Mr. Shorthouse's *John Inglesant* in a description of the *Argonautics* of Apollonius Rhodius; and when we are told that the superb Pavilion erected in Alexandria by Ptolemy Philadelphus was a 'sort of glorified Holborn Restaurant,' we must say that the elaborate description of the building given in Athenæus could have been summed up in a better and a more intelligible epigram.

On the whole, however, Mr. Mahaffy's book may have the effect of drawing attention to a very important and interesting period in the history of Hellenism. We can only regret that, just as he has spoiled his account of Greek politics by a foolish partisan bias, so he should have marred the value of some of his remarks on literature by a bias that is quite as unmeaning. It is uncouth and harsh to say that 'the superannuated schoolboy who holds fellowships and masterships at English colleges' knows nothing of the period in question except what he reads in Theocritus, or that a man may be considered in England a distinguished Greek professor 'who does not know a single date in Greek history between the death of Alexander and the battle of Cynoscephalæ'; and the statement that Lucian, Plutarch, and the four Gospels are excluded from English school and college studies in consequence of the pedantry of 'pure scholars, as they are pleased to

MR. MORRIS'S ODYSSEY

call themselves,' is, of course, quite inaccurate. In fact, not merely does Mr. Mahaffy miss the spirit of the true historian, but he often seems entirely devoid of the temper of the true man of letters. He is clever, and, at times, even brilliant, but he lacks reasonableness, moderation, style and charm. He seems to have no sense of literary proportion, and, as a rule, spoils his case by overstating it. With all his passion for imperialism, there is something about Mr. Mahaffy that is, if not parochial, at least provincial, and we cannot say that this last book of his will add anything to his reputation either as an historian, a critic, or a man of taste.

Greek Life and Thought : from the Age of Alexander to the Roman Conquest. By J. P. Mahaffy, Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin. (Macmillan and Co.)

MR. MORRIS'S COMPLETION OF THE ODYSSEY

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, November 24, 1887.)

MR. MORRIS'S second volume brings the great romantic epic of Greek literature to its perfect conclusion, and although there can never be an ultimate translation of either *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, as each successive age is sure to find pleasure in rendering the two poems in its own manner and according to its own canons of taste, still it is not too much to say that Mr. Morris's version will always be a true classic amongst our classical translations. It is not, of course, flawless. In our notice of the first volume we ventured to say that Mr. Morris was sometimes far more Norse than Greek, nor does the volume that now lies before us make us alter that opinion. The particular metre, also, selected by Mr. Morris, although admirably adapted to express 'the

REVIEWS

strong-winged music of Homer,' as far as its flow and freedom are concerned, misses something of its dignity and calm. Here, it must be admitted, we feel a distinct loss, for there is in Homer not a little of Milton's lofty manner, and if swiftness be an essential of the Greek hexameter, stateliness is one of its distinguishing qualities in Homer's hands. This defect, however, if we must call it a defect, seems almost unavoidable, as for certain metrical reasons a majestic movement in English verse is necessarily a slow movement; and, after all that can be said is said, how really admirable is this whole translation! If we set aside its noble qualities as a poem and look on it purely from the scholar's point of view, how straightforward it is, how honest and direct! Its fidelity to the original is far beyond that of any other verse-translation in our literature, and yet it is not the fidelity of a pedant to his text but rather the fine loyalty of poet to poet.

When Mr. Morris's first volume appeared many of the critics complained that his occasional use of archaic words and unusual expressions robbed his version of the true Homeric simplicity. This, however, is not a very felicitous criticism, for while Homer is undoubtedly simple in his clearness and largeness of vision, his wonderful power of direct narration, his wholesome sanity, and the purity and precision of his method, simple in language he undoubtedly is not. What he was to his contemporaries we have, of course, no means of judging, but we know that the Athenian of the fifth century B.C. found him in many places difficult to understand, and when the creative age was succeeded by the age of criticism and Alexandria began to take the place of Athens as the centre of culture

MR. MORRIS'S *ODYSSEY*

for the Hellenistic world, Homeric dictionaries and glossaries seem to have been constantly published. Indeed, Athenæus tells us of a wonderful Byzantine blue-stocking, a *précieuse* from the Propontis, who wrote a long hexameter poem, called *Mnemosyne*, full of ingenious commentaries on difficulties in Homer, and in fact, it is evident that, as far as the language is concerned, such a phrase as 'Homeric simplicity' would have rather amazed an ancient Greek. As for Mr. Morris's tendency to emphasise the etymological meaning of words, a point commented on with somewhat flippant severity in a recent number of *Macmillan's Magazine*, here Mr. Morris seems to us to be in complete accord, not merely with the spirit of Homer, but with the spirit of all early poetry. It is quite true that language is apt to degenerate into a system of almost algebraic symbols, and the modern city-man who takes a ticket for Blackfriars Bridge, naturally never thinks of the Dominican monks who once had their monastery by Thames-side, and after whom the spot is named. But in earlier times it was not so. Men were then keenly conscious of the real meaning of words, and early poetry, especially, is full of this feeling, and, indeed, may be said to owe to it no small portion of its poetic power and charm. These old words, then, and this old use of words which we find in Mr. Morris's *Odyssey* can be amply justified upon historical grounds, and as for their artistic effect, it is quite excellent. Pope tried to put Homer into the ordinary language of his day, with what result we know only too well; but Mr. Morris, who uses his archaisms with the tact of a true artist, and to whom indeed they seem to come absolutely naturally, has succeeded in giving to his version by their aid that touch, not of ' quaintness,

REVIEWS

for Homer is never quaint, but of old-world romance and old-world beauty, which we moderns find so pleasurable, and to which the Greeks themselves were so keenly sensitive.

As for individual passages of special merit, Mr. Morris's translation is no robe of rags sewn with purple patches for critics to sample. Its real value lies in the absolute rightness and coherence of the whole, in the grand architecture of the swift, strong verse, and in the fact that the standard is not merely high but everywhere sustained. It is impossible, however, to resist the temptation of quoting Mr. Morris's rendering of that famous passage in the twenty-third book of the epic, in which Odysseus eludes the trap laid for him by Penelope, whose very faith in the certainty of her husband's return makes her sceptical of his identity when he stands before her; an instance, by the way, of Homer's wonderful psychological knowledge of human nature, as it is always the dreamer himself who is most surprised when his dream comes true.

Thus she spake to prove her husband; but Odysseus, grieved at heart,

Spake thus unto his bed-mate well-skilled in gainful art:

'O woman, thou sayest a word exceeding grievous to me!

Who hath elsewhere shifted my bedstead? full hard for him should it be,

For as deft as he were, unless soothly a very God come here,

Who easily, if he willed it, might shift it elsewhere.

But no mortal man is living, how strong soe'er in his youth,

Who shall lightly hale it elsewhere, since a mighty wonder for-sooth

Is wrought in that fashioned bedstead, and I wrought it, and I alone.

In the close grew a thicket of olive, a long-leaved tree full-grown,

That flourished and grew goodly as big as a pillar about,

So round it I built my bride-room, till I did the work right out

With ashlar stone close-fitting; and I roofed it overhead,

And thereto joined doors I made me, well-fitting in their stead.

MR. MORRIS'S *ODYSSEY*

Then I lopped away the boughs of the long-leaved olive-tree,
And, shearing the bole from the root up full well and cunningly,
I planed it about with the brass, and set the rule thereto,
And shaping thereof a bed-post, with the wimble I bored it
through.

So beginning, I wrought out the bedstead, and finished it utterly,
And with gold enwrought it about, and with silver and ivory,
And stretched on it a thong of oxhide with the purple dye made
bright.

Thus then the sign I have shown thee ; nor, woman, know I aright
If my bed yet bideth steadfast, or if to another place
Some man hath moved it, and smitten the olive-bole from its base.'

These last twelve books of the *Odyssey* have not the same marvel of romance, adventure and colour that we find in the earlier part of the epic. There is nothing in them that we can compare to the exquisite idyll of Nausicaa or to the Titanic humour of the episode in the Cyclops' cave. Penelope has not the glamour of Circe, and the song of the Sirens may sound sweeter than the whizz of the arrows of Odysseus as he stands on the threshold of his hall. Yet, for sheer intensity of passionate power, for concentration of intellectual interest and for masterly dramatic construction, these latter books are quite unequalled. Indeed, they show very clearly how it was that, as Greek art developed, the epos passed into the drama. The whole scheme of the argument, the return of the hero in disguise, his disclosure of himself to his son, his terrible vengeance on his enemies and his final recognition by his wife, reminds us of the plot of more than one Greek play, and shows us what the great Athenian poet meant when he said that his own dramas were merely scraps from Homer's table. In rendering this splendid poem into English verse, Mr. Morris has done our literature a service that can hardly be over-estimated, and it is pleasant to think that, even

REVIEWS

should the classics be entirely excluded from our educational systems, the English boy will still be able to know something of Homer's delightful tales, to catch an echo of his grand music and to wander with the wise Odysseus round 'the shores of old romance.'

The Odyssey of Homer. Done into English Verse by William Morris, Author of *The Earthly Paradise*. Volume II. (Reeves and Turner.)

SIR CHARLES BOWEN'S *VIRGIL*

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, November 30, 1887.)

SIR CHARLES BOWEN'S translation of the *Eclogues* and the first six books of the *Æneid* is hardly the work of a poet, but it is a very charming version for all that, combining as it does the fine loyalty and learning of a scholar with the graceful style of a man of letters, two essential qualifications for any one who would render in English verse the picturesque pastorals of Italian provincial life, or the stately and polished epic of Imperial Rome. Dryden was a true poet, but, for some reason or other, he failed to catch the real Virgilian spirit. His own qualities became defects when he accepted the task of a translator. He is too robust, too manly, too strong. He misses Virgil's strange and subtle sweetness and has but little of his exquisite melody. Professor Conington, on the other hand, was an admirable and painstaking scholar, but he was so entirely devoid of literary tact and artistic insight that he thought that the majesty of Virgil could be rendered in the jingling manner of *Marmion*, and though there is certainly far more of the mediæval knight than of the moss-trooper about *Æneas*, even Mr. Morris's version is not by any means perfect. Compared with

SIR CHARLES BOWEN'S *VIRGIL*

Professor Conington's bad ballad it is, of course, as gold to brass; considered simply as a poem it has noble and enduring qualities of beauty, music and strength; but it hardly conveys to us the sense that the *Æneid* is the literary epic of a literary age. There is more of Homer in it than of Virgil, and the ordinary reader would hardly realise from the flow and spirit of its swinging lines that Virgil was a self-conscious artist, the Laureate of a cultured Court. The *Æneid* bears almost the same relation to the *Iliad* that the *Idylls of the King* do to the old Celtic romances of Arthur. Like them it is full of felicitous modernisms, of exquisite literary echoes and of delicate and delightful pictures; as Lord Tennyson loves England so did Virgil love Rome; the pageants of history and the purple of empire are equally dear to both poets; but neither of them has the grand simplicity or the large humanity of the early singers, and, as a hero, Æneas is no less a failure than Arthur. Sir Charles Bowen's version hardly gives us this peculiar literary quality of Virgil's verse, and, now and then, it reminds us, by some awkward inversion, of the fact that it is a translation; still, on the whole, it is extremely pleasant to read, and, if it does not absolutely mirror Virgil, it at least brings us many charming memories of him.

The metre Sir Charles Bowen has selected is a form of English hexameter, with the final disyllable shortened into a foot of a single syllable only. It is, of course, accentual not quantitative, and though it misses that element of sustained strength which is given by the dissyllabic ending of the Latin verse, and has consequently a tendency to fall into couplets, the increased facility of rhym-

REVIEWS

ing gained by the change is of no small value. To any English metre that aims at swiftness of movement rhyme seems to be an absolute essential, and there are not enough double rhymes in our language to admit of the retention of this final dissyllabic foot.

As an example of Sir Charles Bowen's method we would take his rendering of the famous passage in the fifth *Eclogue* on the death of Daphnis:

All of the nymphs went weeping for Daphnis cruelly slain:
Ye were witnesses, hazels and river waves, of the pain
When to her son's sad body the mother clave with a cry,
Calling the great gods cruel, and cruel the stars of the sky.
None upon those dark days their pastured oxen did lead,
Daphnis, to drink of the cold clear rivulet; never a steed
Tasted the flowing waters, or cropped one blade in the mead.
Over thy grave how the lions of Carthage roared in despair,
Daphnis, the echoes of mountain wild and of forest declare.
Daphnis was first who taught us to guide, with a chariot rein,
Far Armenia's tigers, the chorus of Iacchus to train,
Led us with foliage waving the pliant spear to entwine.
As to the tree her vine is a glory, her grapes to the vine,
Bull to the horned herd, and the corn to a fruitful plain,
Thou to thine own wert beauty; and since fate robbed us of thee,
Pales herself, and Apollo are gone from meadow and lea.

'Calling the great gods cruel, and cruel the stars of the sky' is a very felicitous rendering of 'Atque deos atque astra vocat crudelia mater,' and so is 'Thou to thine own wert beauty' for 'Tu decus omne tuis.' This passage, too, from the fourth book of the *Æneid* is good:

Now was the night. Tired limbs upon earth were folded to sleep,
Silent the forests and fierce sea-waves; in the firmament deep
Midway rolled heaven's stars; no sound on the meadow stirred;
Every beast of the field, each bright-hued feathery bird
Haunting the limpid lakes, or the tangled briary glade,
Under the silent night in sleep were peacefully laid:
All but the grieving Queen. She yields her never to rest,
Takes not the quiet night to her eyelids or wearied breast.

SIR CHARLES BOWEN'S *VIRGIL*

And this from the sixth book is worth quoting :

‘Never again such hopes shall a youth of the lineage of Troy
Rouse in his great forefathers of Latium ! Never a boy
Nobler pride shall inspire in the ancient Romulus land !
Ah, for his filial love ! for his old-world faith ! for his hand
Matchless in battle ! Unharm’d what foemen had offer’d to stand
Forth in his path, when charging on foot for the enemy’s ranks
Or when plunging the spur in his foam-flecked courser’s flanks !
Child of a nation’s sorrow ! if thou canst baffle the Fates’
Bitter decrees, and break for a while their barrier gates,
Thine to become Marcellus ! I pray thee bring me anon
Handfuls of lilies, that I bright flowers may strew on my son,
Heap on the shade of the boy unborn these gifts at the least,
Doing the dead, though vainly, the last sad service.’

He ceased.

‘Thine to become Marcellus’ has hardly the simple pathos of ‘Tu Marcellus eris,’ but ‘Child of a nation’s sorrow’ is a graceful rendering of ‘Heu, miserande puer.’ Indeed, there is a great deal of feeling in the whole translation, and the tendency of the metre to run into couplets, of which we have spoken before, is corrected to a certain degree in the passage quoted above from the *Eclogues* by the occasional use of the triplet, as, elsewhere, by the introduction of alternate, not successive, rhymes.

Sir Charles Bowen is to be congratulated on the success of his version. It has both style and fidelity to recommend it. The metre he has chosen seems to us more suited to the sustained majesty of the *Æneid* than it is to the pastoral note of the *Eclogues*. It can bring us something of the strength of the lyre but has hardly caught the sweetness of the pipe. Still, it is in many points a very charming translation, and we gladly welcome it as a most valuable addition to the literature of echoes.

Virgil in English Verse. Eclogues and Æneid I.-VI. By the Right Hon. Sir Charles Bowen, one of Her Majesty’s Lords Justices of Appeal. (John Murray.)

REVIEWS

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

II

(*Woman's World*, December 1887.)

LADY BELLAIRS'S *Gossips with Girls and Maidens* contains some very interesting essays, and a quite extraordinary amount of useful information on all matters connected with the mental and physical training of women. It is very difficult to give good advice without being irritating, and almost impossible to be at once didactic and delightful; but Lady Bellaïrs manages very cleverly to steer a middle course between the Charybdis of dulness and the Scylla of flippancy. There is a pleasing *intimité* about her style, and almost everything that she says has both good sense and good humour to recommend it. Nor does she confine herself to those broad generalisations on morals, which are so easy to make, so difficult to apply. Indeed, she seems to have a wholesome contempt for the cheap severity of abstract ethics, enters into the most minute details for the guidance of conduct, and draws out elaborate lists of what girls should avoid, and what they should cultivate.

Here are some specimens of 'What to Avoid':—

A loud, weak, affected, whining, harsh, or shrill tone of voice.

Extravagancies in conversation—such phrases as 'Awfully this,' 'Beastly that,' 'Loads of time,' 'Don't you know,' 'hate' for 'dislike,' etc.

Sudden exclamations of annoyance, surprise, or joy—often dangerously approaching to 'female swearing'—as 'Bother!' 'Gracious!' 'How jolly!'

Yawning when listening to any one.

Talking on family matters, even to your bosom friends.

Attempting any vocal or instrumental piece of music that you cannot execute with ease.

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

Crossing your letters.

Making a short, sharp nod with the head, intended to do duty for a bow.

All nonsense in the shape of belief in dreams, omens, pre-sentiments, ghosts, spiritualism, palmistry, etc.

Entertaining wild flights of the imagination, or empty idealistic aspirations.

I am afraid that I have a good deal of sympathy with what are called 'empty idealistic aspirations'; and 'wild flights of the imagination' are so extremely rare in the nineteenth century that they seem to me deserving rather of praise than of censure. The exclamation 'Bother!' also, though certainly lacking in beauty, might, I think, be permitted under circumstances of extreme aggravation, such as, for instance, the rejection of a manuscript by the editor of a magazine; but in all other respects the list seems to be quite excellent. As for 'What to Cultivate,' nothing could be better than the following:

An unaffected, low, distinct, silver-toned voice.

The art of pleasing those around you, and seeming pleased with them, and all they may do for you.

The charm of making little sacrifices quite naturally, as if of no account to yourself.

The habit of making allowances for the opinions, feelings, or prejudices of others.

An erect carriage—that is, a sound body.

A good memory for faces, and facts connected with them—thus avoiding giving offence through not recognising or bowing to people, or saying to them what had best been left unsaid.

The art of listening without impatience to prosy talkers, and smiling at the twice-told tale or joke.

I cannot help thinking that the last aphorism aims at too high a standard. There is always a certain amount of danger in any attempt to cultivate impossible virtues. However, it is only fair to add that Lady Bellairs recognises the importance of self-

REVIEWS

development quite as much as the importance of self-denial; and there is a great deal of sound sense in everything that she says about the gradual growth and formation of character. Indeed, those who have not read Aristotle upon this point might with advantage read Lady Bellairs.

Miss Constance Naden's little volume, *A Modern Apostle and Other Poems*, shows both culture and courage—culture in its use of language, courage in its selection of subject-matter. The modern apostle of whom Miss Naden sings is a young clergyman who preaches Pantheistic Socialism in the Free Church of some provincial manufacturing town, converts everybody, except the woman whom he loves, and is killed in a street riot. The story is exceedingly powerful, but seems more suitable for prose than for verse. It is right that a poet should be full of the spirit of his age, but the external forms of modern life are hardly, as yet, expressive of that spirit. They are truths of fact, not truths of the imagination, and though they may give the poet an opportunity for realism, they often rob the poem of the reality that is so essential to it. Art, however, is a matter of result, not of theory, and if the fruit is pleasant, we should not quarrel about the tree. Miss Naden's work is distinguished by rich imagery, fine colour, and sweet music, and these are things for which we should be grateful, wherever we find them. In point of mere technical skill, her longer poems are the best; but some of the shorter poems are very fascinating. This, for instance, is pretty:

The copyist group was gathered round
A time-worn fresco, world-renowned,
Whose central glory once had been
The face of Christ, the Nazarene.

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

And every copyist of the crowd
With his own soul that face endowed,
Gentle, severe, majestic, mean;
But which was Christ, the Nazarene?
Then one who watched them made complaint,
And marvelled, saying, 'Wherefore paint
Till ye be sure your eyes have seen
The face of Christ, the Nazarene?'

And this sonnet is full of suggestion :

The wine-flushed monarch slept, but in his ear
An angel breathed—'Repent, or choose the flame
Quenchless.' In dread he woke, but not in shame,
Deep musing—'Sin I love, yet hell I fear.'
Wherefore he left his feasts and minions dear,
And justly ruled, and died a saint in name.
But when his hasting spirit heavenward came,
A stern voice cried—'O Soul! what dost thou here?
'Love I forswore, and wine, and kept my vow
To live a just and joyless life, and now
I crave reward.' The voice came like a knell—
'Fool! dost thou hope to find again thy mirth,
And those foul joys thou didst renounce on earth?
Yea, enter in! My heaven shall be thy hell.'

Miss Constance Naden deserves a high place among our living poetesses, and this, as Mrs. Sharp has shown lately in her volume, entitled *Women's Voices*, is no mean distinction.

Phyllis Browne's *Life of Mrs. Somerville* forms part of a very interesting little series, called 'The World's Workers'—a collection of short biographies catholic enough to include personalities so widely different as Turner and Richard Cobden, Handel and Sir Titus Salt, Robert Stephenson and Florence Nightingale, and yet possessing a certain definite aim. As a mathematician and a scientist, the translator and populariser of *La Mécanique Céleste*, and the

REVIEWS

author of an important book on physical geography, Mrs. Somerville is, of course, well known. The scientific bodies of Europe covered her with honours; her bust stands in the hall of the Royal Society, and one of the Women's Colleges at Oxford bears her name. Yet, considered simply in the light of a wife and a mother, she is no less admirable; and those who consider that stupidity is the proper basis for the domestic virtues, and that intellectual women must of necessity be helpless with their hands, cannot do better than read Phyllis Browne's pleasant little book, in which they will find that the greatest woman-mathematician of any age was a clever needlewoman, a good housekeeper, and a most skilful cook. Indeed, Mrs. Somerville seems to have been quite renowned for her cookery. The discoverers of the North-West Passage christened an island 'Somerville,' not as a tribute to the distinguished mathematician, but as a recognition of the excellence of some orange marmalade which the distinguished mathematician had prepared with her own hands and presented to the ships before they left England; and to the fact that she was able to make currant jelly at a very critical moment she owed the affection of some of her husband's relatives, who up to that time had been rather prejudiced against her on the ground that she was merely an unpractical Blue-stockings.

Nor did her scientific knowledge ever warp or dull the tenderness and humanity of her nature. For birds and animals she had always a great love. We hear of her as a little girl watching with eager eyes the swallows as they built their nests in summer or prepared for their flight in the autumn; and when snow was on the ground she used to open the windows to let the robins hop in and pick crumbs on

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

the breakfast-table. On one occasion she went with her father on a tour in the Highlands, and found on her return that a pet goldfinch, which had been left in the charge of the servants, had been neglected by them and had died of starvation. She was almost heart-broken at the event, and in writing her *Recollections*, seventy years after, she mentioned it and said that, as she wrote, she felt deep pain. Her chief pet in her old age was a mountain sparrow, which used to perch on her arm and go to sleep there while she was writing. One day the sparrow fell into the water-jug and was drowned, to the great grief of its mistress who could hardly be consoled for its loss, though later on we hear of a beautiful paroquet taking the place of *le moineau d'Uranie*, and becoming Mrs. Somerville's constant companion. She was also very energetic, Phyllis Browne tells us, in trying to get a law passed in the Italian Parliament for the protection of animals, and said once, with reference to this subject, 'We English cannot boast of humanity so long as our sportsmen find pleasure in shooting down tame pigeons as they fly terrified out of a cage'—a remark with which I entirely agree. Mr. Herbert's Bill for the protection of land birds gave her immense pleasure, though, to quote her own words, she was 'grieved to find that "the lark, which at heaven's gate sings," is thought unworthy of man's protection'; and she took a great fancy to a gentleman who, on being told of the number of singing birds that is eaten in Italy—nightingales, goldfinches, and robins—exclaimed in horror, 'What! robins! our household birds! I would as soon eat a child!' Indeed, she believed to some extent in the immortality of animals on the ground that, if animals have no future, it would seem as if some were created

REVIEWS

for uncompensated misery—an idea which does not seem to me to be either extravagant or fantastic, though it must be admitted that the optimism on which it is based receives absolutely no support from science.

On the whole, Phyllis Browne's book is very pleasant reading. Its only fault is that it is far too short, and this is a fault so rare in modern literature that it almost amounts to a distinction. However, Phyllis Browne has managed to crowd into the narrow limits at her disposal a great many interesting anecdotes. The picture she gives of Mrs. Somerville working away at her translation of Laplace in the same room with her children is very charming, and reminds one of what is told of George Sand; there is an amusing account of Mrs. Somerville's visit to the widow of the young Pretender, the Countess of Albany, who, after talking with her for some time, exclaimed, 'So you don't speak Italian. You must have had a very bad education'! And this story about the Waverley Novels may possibly be new to some of my readers:

A very amusing circumstance in connection with Mrs. Somerville's acquaintance with Sir Walter arose out of the childish inquisitiveness of Woronzow Greig, Mrs. Somerville's little boy.

During the time Mrs. Somerville was visiting Abbotsford the Waverley Novels were appearing, and were creating a great sensation; yet even Scott's intimate friends did not know that he was the author; he enjoyed keeping the affair a mystery. But little Woronzow discovered what he was about. One day when Mrs. Somerville was talking about a novel that had just been published, Woronzow said, 'I knew all these stories long ago, for Mr. Scott writes on the dinner-table; when he has finished he puts the green cloth with the papers in a corner of the dining-room, and when he goes out Charlie Scott and I read the stories.'

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

Phyllis Browne remarks that this incident shows 'that persons who want to keep a secret ought to be very careful when children are about'; but the story seems to me to be far too charming to require any moral of the kind.

Bound up in the same volume is a *Life of Miss Mary Carpenter*, also written by Phyllis Browne. Miss Carpenter does not seem to me to have the charm and fascination of Mrs. Somerville. There is always something about her that is formal, limited, and precise. When she was about two years old she insisted on being called 'Doctor Carpenter' in the nursery; at the age of twelve she is described by a friend as a sedate little girl, who always spoke like a book; and before she entered on her educational schemes she wrote down a solemn dedication of herself to the service of humanity. However, she was one of the practical, hardworking saints of the nineteenth century, and it is no doubt quite right that the saints should take themselves very seriously. It is only fair also to remember that her work of rescue and reformation was carried on under great difficulties. Here, for instance, is the picture Miss Cobbe gives us of one of the Bristol night-schools:

It was a wonderful spectacle to see Mary Carpenter sitting patiently before the large school gallery in St. James's Back, teaching, singing, and praying with the wild street-boys, in spite of endless interruptions caused by such proceedings as shooting marbles at any object behind her, whistling, stamping, fighting, shrieking out 'Amen' in the middle of a prayer, and sometimes rising *en masse* and tearing like a troop of bison in hob-nailed shoes down from the gallery, round the great schoolroom, and down the stairs, and into the street. These irrepressible outbreaks she bore with infinite good humour.

REVIEWS

Her own account is somewhat pleasanter, and shows that 'the troop of bisons in hob-nailed shoes' was not always so barbarous.

I had taken to my class on the preceding week some specimens of ferns neatly gummed on white paper. . . . This time I took a piece of coal-shale, with impressions of ferns, to show them. . . . I told each to examine the specimen, and tell me what he thought it was. W. gave so bright a smile that I saw he knew; none of the others could tell; he said they were ferns, like what I showed them last week, but he thought they were chiselled on the stone. Their surprise and pleasure were great when I explained the matter to them.

The history of Joseph: they all found a difficulty in realising that this had actually occurred. One asked if Egypt existed now, and if people lived in it. When I told them that buildings now stood which had been erected about the time of Joseph, one said that it was impossible, as they must have fallen down ere this. I showed them the form of a pyramid, and they were satisfied. One asked if *all* books were true.

The story of Macbeth impressed them very much. They knew the name of Shakespeare, having seen his name over a public-house.

A boy defined conscience as 'a thing a gentleman hasn't got, who, when a boy finds his purse and gives it back to him, doesn't give the boy sixpence.'

Another boy was asked, after a Sunday evening lecture on 'Thankfulness,' what pleasure he enjoyed most in the course of a year. He replied candidly, 'Cock-fightin', ma'am; there's a pit up by the "Black Boy" as is worth anythink in Brissel.'

There is something a little pathetic in the attempt to civilise the rough street-boy by means of the refining influence of ferns and fossils, and it is difficult to help feeling that Miss Carpenter rather over-estimated the value of elementary education. The poor are not to be fed upon facts. Even Shakespeare and the Pyramids are not sufficient; nor is

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

there much use in giving them the results of culture, unless we also give them those conditions under which culture can be realised. In these cold, crowded cities of the North, the proper basis for morals, using the word in its wide Hellenic signification, is to be found in architecture, not in books.

Still, it would be ungenerous not to recognise that Mary Carpenter gave to the children of the poor not merely her learning, but her love. In early life, her biographer tells us, she had longed for the happiness of being a wife and a mother; but later she became content that her affection could be freely given to all who needed it, and the verse in the prophecies, 'I have given thee children whom thou hast not borne,' seemed to her to indicate what was to be her true mission. Indeed, she rather inclined to Bacon's opinion, that unmarried people do the best public work. 'It is quite striking,' she says in one of her letters, 'to observe how much the useful power and influence of woman has developed of late years. Unattached ladies, such as widows and unmarried women, have quite ample work to do in the world for the good of others to absorb all their powers. Wives and mothers have a very noble work given them by God, and want no more.' The whole passage is extremely interesting, and the phrase 'unattached ladies' is quite delightful, and reminds one of Charles Lamb.

Ismay's Children is by the clever authoress of that wonderful little story *Flitters, Tatters, and the Counsellor*, a story which delighted the realists by its truth, fascinated Mr. Ruskin by its beauty, and remains to the present day the most perfect picture

REVIEWS

of street-arab life in all English prose fiction. The scene of the novel is laid in the south of Ireland, and the plot is extremely dramatic and ingenious. Godfrey Mauleverer, a reckless young Irishman, runs away with Ismay D'Arcy, a pretty, penniless governess, and is privately married to her in Scotland. Some time after the birth of her third child, Ismay died, and her husband, who had never made his marriage public, nor taken any pains to establish the legitimacy of his children, is drowned while yachting off the coast of France. The care of Ismay's children then devolves on an old aunt, Miss Juliet D'Arcy, who brings them back to Ireland to claim their inheritance for them. But a sudden stroke of paralysis deprives her of her memory, and she forgets the name of the little Scotch village in which Ismay's informal marriage took place. So Tighe O'Malley holds Barrettstown, and Ismay's children live in an old mill close to the great park of which they are the rightful heirs. The boy, who is called Godfrey after his father, is a fascinating study, with his swarthy foreign beauty, his fierce moods of love and hate, his passionate pride, and his passionate tenderness. The account of his midnight ride to warn his enemy of an impending attack of Moonlighters is most powerful and spirited; and it is pleasant to meet in modern fiction a character that has all the fine inconsistencies of life, and is neither too fantastic an exception to be true, nor too ordinary a type to be common. Excellent also, in its direct simplicity of rendering, is the picture of Miss Juliet D'Arcy; and the scene in which, at the moment of her death, the old woman's memory returns to her is quite admirable, both in conception and in treatment. To me, however, the chief

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

interest of the book lies in the little lifelike sketches of Irish character with which it abounds. Modern realistic art has not yet produced a Hamlet, but at least it may claim to have studied Guildenstern and Rosencrantz very closely; and, for pure fidelity and truth to nature, nothing could be better than the minor characters in *Ismay's Children*. Here we have the kindly old priest who arranges all the marriages in his parish, and has a strong objection to people who insist on making long confessions; the important young curate fresh from Maynooth, who gives himself more airs than a bishop, and has to be kept in order; the professional beggars, with their devout faith, their grotesque humour, and their incorrigible laziness; the shrewd shopkeeper, who imports arms in flour-barrels for the use of the Moonlighters and, as soon as he has got rid of them, gives information of their whereabouts to the police; the young men who go out at night to be drilled by an Irish-American; the farmers with their wild land-hunger, bidding secretly against each other for every vacant field; the dispensary doctor, who is always regretting that he has not got a Trinity College degree; the plain girls, who want to go into convents; the pretty girls, who want to get married; and the shopkeepers' daughters, who want to be thought young ladies. There is a whole pell-mell of men and women, a complete panorama of provincial life, an absolutely faithful picture of the peasant in his own home. This note of realism in dealing with national types of character has always been a distinguishing characteristic of Irish fiction, from the days of Miss Edgeworth down to our own days, and it is not difficult to see in *Ismay's Children* some traces of the influence of *Castle Rack-rent*. I fear, however,

REVIEWS

that few people read Miss Edgeworth nowadays, though both Scott and Tourgénéieff acknowledged their indebtedness to her novels, and her style is always admirable in its clearness and precision.

Miss Leffler-Arnim's statement, in a lecture delivered recently at St. Saviour's Hospital, that 'she had heard of instances where ladies were so determined not to exceed the fashionable measurement that they had actually held on to a cross-bar while their maids fastened the fifteen-inch corset,' has excited a good deal of incredulity, but there is nothing really improbable in it. From the sixteenth century to our own day there is hardly any form of torture that has not been inflicted on girls, and endured by women, in obedience to the dictates of an unreasonable and monstrous Fashion. 'In order to obtain a real Spanish figure,' says Montaigne, 'what a Gehenna of suffering will not women endure, drawn in and compressed by great *coches* entering the flesh; nay, sometimes they even die thereof!' 'A few days after my arrival at school,' Mrs. Somerville tells us in her memoirs, 'although perfectly straight and well made, I was enclosed in stiff stays, with a steel busk in front; while above my frock, bands drew my shoulders back till the shoulder-blades met. Then a steel rod with a semi-circle, which went under my chin, was clasped to the steel busk in my stays. In this constrained state I and most of the younger girls had to prepare our lessons'; and in the life of Miss Edgeworth we read that, being sent to a certain fashionable establishment, 'she underwent all the usual tortures of back-boards, iron collars and dumbs, and also (because she was a very tiny person) the unusual one

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

of being hung by the neck to draw out the muscles and increase the growth,' a signal failure in her case. Indeed, instances of absolute mutilation and misery are so common in the past that it is unnecessary to multiply them; but it is really sad to think that in our own day a civilised woman can hang on to a cross-bar while her maid laces her waist into a fifteen-inch circle. To begin with, the waist is not a circle at all, but an oval; nor can there be any greater error than to imagine that an unnaturally small waist gives an air of grace, or even of slightness, to the whole figure. Its effect, as a rule, is simply to exaggerate the width of the shoulders and the hips; and those whose figures possess that stateliness which is called stoutness by the vulgar, convert what is a quality into a defect by yielding to the silly edicts of Fashion on the subject of tight-lacing. The fashionable English waist, also, is not merely far too small, and consequently quite out of proportion to the rest of the figure, but it is worn far too low down. I use the expression 'worn' advisedly, for a waist nowadays seems to be regarded as an article of apparel to be put on when and where one likes. A long waist always implies shortness of the lower limbs, and, from the artistic point of view, has the effect of diminishing the height; and I am glad to see that many of the most charming women in Paris are returning to the idea of the Directoire style of dress. This style is not by any means perfect, but at least it has the merit of indicating the proper position of the waist. I feel quite sure that all English women of culture and position will set their faces against such stupid and dangerous practices as are related by Miss Leffler-Arnim. Fashion's motto is: *Il faut souffrir pour être belle*;

REVIEWS

but the motto of art and of common-sense is: *Il faut être bête pour souffrir.*

Talking of Fashion, a critic in the *Pall Mall Gazette* expresses his surprise that I should have allowed an illustration of a hat, covered with 'the bodies of dead birds,' to appear in the first number of the *Woman's World*; and as I have received many letters on the subject, it is only right that I should state my exact position in the matter. Fashion is such an essential part of the *mundus muliebris* of our day, that it seems to me absolutely necessary that its growth, development, and phases should be duly chronicled; and the historical and practical value of such a record depends entirely upon its perfect fidelity to fact. Besides, it is quite easy for the children of light to adapt almost any fashionable form of dress to the requirements of utility and the demands of good taste. The Sarah Bernhardt tea-gown, for instance, figured in the present issue, has many good points about it, and the gigantic dress-improver does not appear to me to be really essential to the mode; and though the Postillion costume of the fancy dress ball is absolutely detestable in its silliness and vulgarity, the so-called Late Georgian costume in the same plate is rather pleasing. I must, however, protest against the idea that to chronicle the development of Fashion implies any approval of the particular forms that Fashion may adopt.

Mrs. Craik's article on the condition of the English stage will, I feel sure, be read with great interest by all who are watching the development of dramatic art in this country. It was the last thing written by the author of *John Halifax, Gentleman*, and

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

reached me only a few days before her lamented death. That the state of things is such as Mrs. Craik describes, few will be inclined to deny; though, for my own part, I must acknowledge that I see more vulgarity than vice in the tendencies of the modern stage; nor do I think it possible to elevate dramatic art by limiting its subject-matter. *On tue une littérature quand on lui interdit la vérité humaine.* As far as the serious presentation of life is concerned, what we require is more imaginative treatment, greater freedom from theatric language and theatric convention. It may be questioned, also, whether the consistent reward of virtue and punishment of wickedness be really the healthiest ideal for an art that claims to mirror nature. However, it is impossible not to recognise the fine feeling that actuates every line of Mrs. Craik's article; and though one may venture to disagree with the proposed method, one cannot but sympathise with the purity and delicacy of the thought, and the high nobility of the aim.

The French Minister of Education, M. Spuller, has paid Racine a very graceful and appropriate compliment, in naming after him the second college that has been opened in Paris for the higher education of girls. Racine was one of the privileged few who was allowed to read the celebrated *Traité de l'Education des Filles* before it appeared in print; he was charged, along with Boileau, with the task of revising the text of the constitution and rules of Madame de Maintenon's great college; it was for the Demoiselles de St. Cyr that he composed *Athalie*; and he devoted a great deal of his time to the education of his own children. The Lycée

REVIEWS

Racine will, no doubt, become as important an institution as the Lycée Fénelon, and the speech delivered by M. Spuller on the occasion of its opening was full of the happiest augury for the future. M. Spuller dwelt at great length on the value of Goethe's aphorism, that the test of a good wife is her capacity to take her husband's place and to become a father to his children, and mentioned that the thing that struck him most in America was the wonderful Brooklyn Bridge, a superb titanic structure, which was completed under the direction of the engineer's wife, the engineer himself having died while the building of the bridge was in progress. 'Il me semble,' said M. Spuller, 'que la femme de l'ingénieur du pont de Brooklyn a réalisé la pensée de Goethe, et que non seulement elle est devenue un père pour ses enfants, mais un autre père pour l'œuvre admirable, vraiment unique, qui a immortalisé le nom qu'elle portait avec son mari.' M. Spuller also laid great stress on the necessity of a thoroughly practical education, and was extremely severe on the 'Blue-stockings' of literature. 'Il ne s'agit pas de former ici des "femmes savantes." Les "femmes savantes" ont été marquées pour jamais par un des plus grands génies de notre race d'une légère teinte de ridicule. Non, ce n'est pas des femmes savantes que nous voulons: ce sont tout simplement des femmes: des femmes dignes de ce pays de France, qui est la patrie du bon sens, de la mesure, et de la grâce; des femmes ayant la notion juste et le sens exquis du rôle qui doit leur appartenir dans la société moderne.' There is, no doubt, a great deal of truth in M. Spuller's observations, but we must not mistake a caricature for the reality. After all, *Les Précieuses Ridicules* contrasted very

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

favourably with the ordinary type of womanhood of their day, not merely in France, but also in England; and an uncritical love of sonnets is preferable, on the whole, to coarseness, vulgarity and ignorance.

I am glad to see that Miss Ramsay's brilliant success at Cambridge is not destined to remain an isolated instance of what women can do in intellectual competitions with men. At the Royal University in Ireland, the Literature Scholarship of £100 a year for five years has been won by Miss Story, the daughter of a North of Ireland clergyman. It is pleasant to be able to chronicle an item of Irish news that has nothing to do with the violence of party politics or party feeling, and that shows how worthy women are of that higher culture and education which has been so tardily and, in some instances, so grudgingly granted to them.

The Empress of Japan has been ordering a whole wardrobe of fashionable dresses in Paris for her own use and the use of her ladies-in-waiting. The chrysanthemum (the imperial flower of Japan) has suggested the tints of most of the Empress's own gowns, and in accordance with the colour-schemes of other flowers the rest of the costumes have been designed. The same steamer, however, that carries out the masterpieces of M. Worth and M. Félix to the Land of the Rising Sun, also brings to the Empress a letter of formal and respectful remonstrance from the English Rational Dress Society. I trust that, even if the Empress rejects the sensible arguments of this important Society, her own artistic feeling may induce her to reconsider her resolution to abandon Eastern for Western costume.

REVIEWS

I hope that some of my readers will interest themselves in the Ministering Children's League for which Mr. Walter Crane has done the beautiful and suggestive design of *The Young Knight*. The best way to make children good is to make them happy, and happiness seems to me an essential part of Lady Meath's admirable scheme.

(1) *Gossips with Girls and Maidens Betrothed and Free*. By Lady Bellairs. (Blackwood and Sons.)

(2) *A Modern Apostle and Other Poems*. By Constance Naden. (Kegan Paul.)

(3) *Mrs. Somerville and Mary Carpenter*. By Phyllis Browne, Author of *What Girls Can Do, etc.* (Cassell and Co.)

(4) *Ismay's Children*. By the Author of *Hogan, M.P. ; Flitters, Tatters, and the Counsellor, etc.* (Macmillan and Co.)

ARISTOTLE AT AFTERNOON TEA

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, December 16, 1887.)

IN society, says Mr. Mahaffy, every civilised man and woman ought to feel it their duty to say something, even when there is hardly anything to be said, and, in order to encourage this delightful art of brilliant chatter, he has published a social guide without which no *débutante* or dandy should ever dream of going out to dine. Not that Mr. Mahaffy's book can be said to be, in any sense of the word, popular. In discussing this important subject of conversation, he has not merely followed the scientific method of Aristotle which is, perhaps, excusable, but he has adopted the literary style of Aristotle for which no excuse is possible. There is, also, hardly a single anecdote, hardly a single illustration, and the reader is left to put the Professor's abstract rules into practice, without either the examples or the warnings of history to encourage or

ARISTOTLE AT AFTERNOON TEA

to dissuade him in his reckless career. Still, the book can be warmly recommended to all who propose to substitute the vice of verbosity for the stupidity of silence. It fascinates in spite of its form and pleases in spite of its pedantry, and is the nearest approach, that we know of, in modern literature to meeting Aristotle at an afternoon tea.

As regards physical conditions, the only one that is considered by Mr. Mahaffy as being absolutely essential to a good conversationalist, is the possession of a musical voice. Some learned writers have been of opinion that a slight stammer often gives peculiar zest to conversation, but Mr. Mahaffy rejects this view and is extremely severe on every eccentricity from a native brogue to an artificial catchword. With his remarks on the latter point, the meaningless repetition of phrases, we entirely agree. Nothing can be more irritating than the scientific person who is always saying '*Exactly so,*' or the commonplace person who ends every sentence with '*Don't you know?*' or the pseudo-artistic person who murmurs '*Charming, charming,*' on the smallest provocation. It is, however, with the mental and moral qualifications for conversation that Mr. Mahaffy specially deals. Knowledge he, naturally, regards as an absolute essential, for, as he most justly observes, 'an ignorant man is seldom agreeable, except as a butt.' Upon the other hand, strict accuracy should be avoided. 'Even a consummate liar,' says Mr. Mahaffy, is a better ingredient in a company than 'the scrupulously truthful man, who weighs every statement, questions every fact, and corrects every inaccuracy.' The liar at any rate recognises that recreation, not instruction, is the aim of conversation, and is a far more civilised being than the

REVIEWS

blockhead who loudly expresses his disbelief in a story which is told simply for the amusement of the company. Mr. Mahaffy, however, makes an exception in favour of the eminent specialist and tells us that intelligent questions addressed to an astronomer, or a pure mathematician, will elicit many curious facts which will pleasantly beguile the time. Here, in the interest of Society, we feel bound to enter a formal protest. Nobody, even in the provinces, should ever be allowed to ask an intelligent question about pure mathematics across a dinner-table. A question of this kind is quite as bad as inquiring suddenly about the state of a man's soul, a sort of *coup* which, as Mr. Mahaffy remarks elsewhere, 'many pious people have actually thought a decent introduction to a conversation.'

As for the moral qualifications of a good talker, Mr. Mahaffy, following the example of his great master, warns us against any disproportionate excess of virtue. Modesty, for instance, may easily become a social vice, and to be continually apologising for one's ignorance or stupidity is a grave injury to conversation, for, 'what we want to learn from each member is his free opinion on the subject in hand, not his own estimate of the value of that opinion.' Simplicity, too, is not without its dangers. The *enfant terrible*, with his shameless love of truth, the raw country-bred girl who always says what she means, and the plain, blunt man who makes a point of speaking his mind on every possible occasion, without ever considering whether he has a mind at all, are the fatal examples of what simplicity leads to. Shyness may be a form of vanity, and reserve a development of pride, and as for sympathy, what can be more detestable than the man, or woman,

ARISTOTLE AT AFTERNOON TEA

who insists on agreeing with everybody, and so makes 'a discussion, which implies differences in opinion,' absolutely impossible? Even the unselfish listener is apt to become a bore. 'These silent people,' says Mr. Mahaffy, 'not only take all they can get in Society for nothing, but they take it without the smallest gratitude, and have the audacity afterwards to censure those who have laboured for their amusement.' Tact, which is an exquisite sense of the symmetry of things, is, according to Mr. Mahaffy, the highest and best of all the moral conditions for conversation. The man of tact, he most wisely remarks, 'will instinctively avoid jokes about Blue Beard' in the company of a woman who is a man's third wife; he will never be guilty of talking like a book, but will rather avoid too careful an attention to grammar and the rounding of periods; he will cultivate the art of graceful interruption, so as to prevent a subject being worn threadbare by the aged or the inexperienced; and should he be desirous of telling a story, he will look round and consider each member of the party, and if there be a single stranger present will forgo the pleasure of anecdote rather than make the social mistake of hurting even one of the guests. As for prepared or premeditated art, Mr. Mahaffy has a great contempt for it and tells us of a certain college don (let us hope not at Oxford or Cambridge) who always carried a jest-book in his pocket and had to refer to it when he wished to make a repartee. Great wits, too, are often very cruel, and great humourists often very vulgar, so it will be better to try and 'make good conversation without any large help from these brilliant but dangerous gifts.'

In a *tête-à-tête* one should talk about persons, and

REVIEWS

in general Society about things. The state of the weather is always an excusable exordium, but it is convenient to have a paradox or heresy on the subject always ready so as to direct the conversation into other channels. Really domestic people are almost invariably bad talkers as their very virtues in home life have dulled their interest in outer things. The very best mothers will insist on chattering of their babies and prattling about infant education. In fact, most women do not take sufficient interest in politics, just as most men are deficient in general reading. Still, anybody can be made to talk, except the very obstinate, and even a commercial traveller may be drawn out and become quite interesting. As for Society small talk, it is impossible, Mr. Mahaffy tells us, for any sound theory of conversation to depreciate gossip, 'which is perhaps the main factor in agreeable talk throughout Society.' The retailing of small personal points about great people always gives pleasure, and if one is not fortunate enough to be an Arctic traveller or an escaped Nihilist, the best thing one can do is to relate some anecdote of 'Prince Bismarck, or King Victor Emmanuel, or Mr. Gladstone.' In the case of meeting a genius and a Duke at dinner, the good talker will try to raise himself to the level of the former and to bring the latter down to his own level. To succeed among one's social superiors one must have no hesitation in contradicting them. Indeed, one should make bold criticisms and introduce a bright and free tone into a Society whose grandeur and extreme respectability make it, Mr. Mahaffy remarks, as pathetically as inaccurately, 'perhaps somewhat dull.' The best conversationalists are those whose ancestors have been bilingual, like the French and

EARLY CHRISTIAN ART IN IRELAND

Irish, but the art of conversation is really within the reach of almost every one, except those who are morbidly truthful, or whose high moral worth requires to be sustained by a permanent gravity of demeanour and a general dulness of mind.

These are the broad principles contained in Mr. Mahaffy's clever little book, and many of them will, no doubt, commend themselves to our readers. The maxim, 'If you find the company dull, blame yourself,' seems to us somewhat optimistic, and we have no sympathy at all with the professional story-teller who is really a great bore at a dinner-table; but Mr. Mahaffy is quite right in insisting that no bright social intercourse is possible without equality, and it is no objection to his book to say that it will not teach people how to talk cleverly. It is not logic that makes men reasonable, nor the science of ethics that makes men good, but it is always useful to analyse, to formularise and to investigate. The only thing to be regretted in the volume is the arid and jejune character of the style. If Mr. Mahaffy would only write as he talks, his book would be much pleasanter reading.

The Principles of the Art of Conversation : A Social Essay. By J. P. Mahaffy. (Macmillan and Co.)

EARLY CHRISTIAN ART IN IRELAND

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, December 17, 1887.)

THE want of a good series of popular hand-books on Irish art has long been felt, the works of Sir William Wilde, Petrie and others being somewhat too elaborate for the ordinary student; so we are glad to notice the appearance, under the auspices of the Committee of Council

REVIEWS

on Education, of Miss Margaret Stokes's useful little volume on the early Christian art of her country. There is, of course, nothing particularly original in Miss Stokes's book, nor can she be said to be a very attractive or pleasing writer, but it is unfair to look for originality in primers, and the charm of the illustrations fully atones for the somewhat heavy and pedantic character of the style.

This early Christian art of Ireland is full of interest to the artist, the archæologist and the historian. In its rudest forms, such as the little iron hand-bell, the plain stone chalice and the rough wooden staff, it brings us back to the simplicity of the primitive Christian Church, while to the period of its highest development we owe the great masterpieces of Celtic metal-work. The stone chalice is now replaced by the chalice of silver and gold; the iron bell has its jewel-studded shrine, and the rough staff its gorgeous casing; rich caskets and splendid bindings preserve the holy books of the Saints and, instead of the rudely carved symbol of the early missionaries, we have such beautiful works of art as the processional cross of Cong Abbey. Beautiful this cross certainly is with its delicate intricacy of ornamentation, its grace of proportion and its marvel of mere workmanship, nor is there any doubt about its history. From the inscriptions on it, which are corroborated by the annals of Innisfallen and the book of Clonmacnoise, we learn that it was made for King Turlough O'Connor by a native artist under the superintendence of Bishop O'Duffy, its primary object being to enshrine a portion of the true cross that was sent to the king in 1123. Brought to Cong some years afterwards, probably by the archbishop,

EARLY CHRISTIAN ART IN IRELAND

who died there in 1150, it was concealed at the time of the Reformation, but at the beginning of the present century was still in the possession of the last abbot, and at his death it was purchased by Professor MacCullagh and presented by him to the museum of the Royal Irish Academy. This wonderful work is alone well worth a visit to Dublin, but not less lovely is the chalice of Ardagh, a two-handled silver cup, absolutely classical in its perfect purity of form, and decorated with gold and amber and crystal and with varieties of *cloisonné* and *champlevé* enamel. There is no mention of this cup, or of the so-called Tara brooch, in ancient Irish history. All that we know of them is that they were found accidentally, the former by a boy who was digging potatoes near the old Rath of Ardagh, the latter by a poor child who picked it up near the seashore. They both, however, belong probably to the tenth century.

Of all these works, as well as of the bell shrines, book-covers, sculptured crosses and illuminated designs in manuscripts, excellent pictures are given in Miss Stokes's handbook. The extremely interesting *Fiachal Phadrig*, or shrine of St. Patrick's tooth, might have been figured and noted as an interesting example of the survival of ornament, and one of the old miniatures of the scribe or Evangelist writing would have given an additional interest to the chapter on Irish MSS. On the whole, however, the book is wonderfully well illustrated, and the ordinary art student will be able to get some useful suggestions from it. Indeed, Miss Stokes, echoing the aspirations of many of the great Irish archæologists, looks forward to the revival of a native Irish school in architec-

REVIEWS

ture, sculpture, metal-work and painting. Such an aspiration is, of course, very laudable, but there is always a danger of these revivals being merely artificial reproductions, and it may be questioned whether the peculiar forms of Irish ornamentation could be made at all expressive of the modern spirit. A recent writer on house decoration has gravely suggested that the British householder should take his meals in a Celtic dining-room adorned with a dado of Ogham inscriptions, and such wicked proposals may serve as a warning to all who fancy that the reproduction of a form necessarily implies a revival of the spirit that gave the form life and meaning, and who fail to recognise the difference between art and anachronisms. Miss Stokes's proposal for an ark-shaped church in which the mural painter is to repeat the arcades and 'follow the architectural compositions of the grand pages of the Eusebian canons in the Book of Kells,' has, of course, nothing grotesque about it, but it is not probable that the artistic genius of the Irish people will, even when 'the land has rest,' find in such interesting imitations its healthiest or best expression. Still, there are certain elements of beauty in ancient Irish art that the modern artist would do well to study. The value of the intricate illuminations in the Book of Kells, as far as their adaptability to modern designs and modern material goes, has been very much overrated, but in the ancient Irish torques, brooches, pins, clasps and the like, the modern goldsmith will find a rich and, comparatively speaking, an untouched field; and now that the Celtic spirit has become the leaven of our politics, there is no reason why it should not contribute something to our decorative

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

art. This result, however, will not be obtained by a patriotic misuse of old designs, and even the most enthusiastic Home Ruler must not be allowed to decorate his dining-room with a dado of Oghams.

Early Christian Art in Ireland. By Margaret Stokes. (Published for the Committee of Council on Education by Chapman and Hall.)

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

III

(*Woman's World*, January 1888.)

MADAME RISTORI'S *Etudes et Souvenirs* is one of the most delightful books on the stage that has appeared since Lady Martin's charming volume on the Shakespearian heroines. It is often said that actors leave nothing behind them but a barren name and a withered wreath; that they subsist simply upon the applause of the moment; that they are ultimately doomed to the oblivion of old play-bills; and that their art, in a word, dies with them, and shares their own mortality. 'Chippendale, the cabinet-maker,' says the clever author of *Obiter Dicta*, 'is more potent than Garrick the actor. The vivacity of the latter no longer charms (save in Boswell); the chairs of the former still render rest impossible in a hundred homes.' This view, however, seems to me to be exaggerated. It rests on the assumption that acting is simply a mimetic art, and takes no account of its imaginative and intellectual basis. It is quite true, of course, that the personality of the player passes away, and with it that pleasure-giving power by virtue of which the arts exist. Yet the artistic method of a great

REVIEWS

actor survives. It lives on in tradition, and becomes part of the science of a school. It has all the intellectual life of a principle. In England, at the present moment, the influence of Garrick on our actors is far stronger than that of Reynolds on our painters of portraits, and if we turn to France it is easy to discern the tradition of Talma, but where is the tradition of David?

Madame Ristori's memoirs, then, have not merely the charm that always attaches to the autobiography of a brilliant and beautiful woman, but have also a definite and distinct artistic value. Her analysis of the character of Lady Macbeth, for instance, is full of psychological interest, and shows us that the subtleties of Shakespearian criticism are not necessarily confined to those who have views on weak endings and rhyming tags, but may also be suggested by the art of acting itself. The author of *Obiter Dicta* seeks to deny to actors all critical insight and all literary appreciation. The actor, he tells us, is art's slave, not her child, and lives entirely outside literature, 'with its words for ever on his lips, and none of its truths engraven on his heart.' But this seems to me to be a harsh and reckless generalisation. Indeed, so far from agreeing with it, I would be inclined to say that the mere artistic process of acting, the translation of literature back again into life, and the presentation of thought under the conditions of action, is in itself a critical method of a very high order; nor do I think that a study of the careers of our great English actors will really sustain the charge of want of literary appreciation. It may be true that actors pass too quickly away from the form, in order to get at the feeling that gives the form

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

beauty and colour, and that, where the literary critic studies the language, the actor looks simply for the life; and yet, how well the great actors have appreciated that marvellous music of words which in Shakespeare, at any rate, is so vital an element of poetic power, if, indeed, it be not equally so in the case of all who have any claim to be regarded as true poets. 'The sensual life of verse,' says Keats, in a dramatic criticism published in the *Champion*, 'springs warm from the lips of Kean, and to one learned in Shakespearian hieroglyphics, learned in the spiritual portion of those lines to which Kean adds a sensual grandeur, his tongue must seem to have robbed the Hybla bees and left them honeyless.' This particular feeling, of which Keats speaks, is familiar to all who have heard Salvini, Sarah Bernhardt, Ristori, or any of the great artists of our day, and it is a feeling that one cannot, I think, gain merely by reading the passage to oneself. For my own part, I must confess that it was not until I heard Sarah Bernhardt in *Phèdre* that I absolutely realised the sweetness of the music of Racine. As for Mr. Birrell's statement that actors have the words of literature for ever on their lips, but none of its truths engraved on their hearts, all that one can say is that, if it be true, it is a defect which actors share with the majority of literary critics.

The account Madame Ristori gives of her own struggles, voyages and adventures, is very pleasant reading indeed. The child of poor actors, she made her first appearance when she was three months old, being brought on in a hamper as a New Year's gift to a selfish old gentleman who would not forgive his daughter for having married for love. As, however,

REVIEWS

she began to cry long before the hamper was opened, the comedy became a farce, to the immense amusement of the public. She next appeared in a mediæval melodrama, being then three years of age, and was so terrified at the machinations of the villain that she ran away at the most critical moment. However, her stage-fright seems to have disappeared, and we find her playing Silvio Pellico's *Francesca da Rimini* at fifteen, and at eighteen making her *début* as Marie Stuart. At this time the naturalism of the French method was gradually displacing the artificial elocution and academic poses of the Italian school of acting. Madame Ristori seems to have tried to combine simplicity with style, and the passion of nature with the self-restraint of the artist. 'J'ai voulu fondre les deux manières,' she tells us, 'car je sentais que toutes choses étant susceptibles de progrès, l'art dramatique aussi était appelé à subir des transformations.' The natural development, however, of the Italian drama was almost arrested by the ridiculous censorship of plays then existing in each town under Austrian or Papal rule. The slightest allusion to the sentiment of nationality or the spirit of freedom was prohibited. Even the word *patria* was regarded as treasonable, and Madame Ristori tells us an amusing story of the indignation of a censor who was asked to license a play, in which a dumb man returns home after an absence of many years, and on his entrance upon the stage makes gestures expressive of his joy in seeing his native land once more. 'Gestures of this kind,' said the censor, 'are obviously of a very revolutionary tendency, and cannot possibly be allowed. The only gestures that I could think of permitting would be gestures expressive of a dumb man's delight in scenery generally.'

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

The stage directions were accordingly altered, and the word 'landscape' substituted for 'native land'! Another censor was extremely severe on an unfortunate poet who had used the expression 'the beautiful Italian sky,' and explained to him that 'the beautiful Lombardo-Venetian sky' was the proper official expression to use. Poor Gregory in *Romeo and Juliet* had to be rechristened, because Gregory is a name dear to the Popes; and the

Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wrecked as homeward he did come,

of the first witch in *Macbeth* was ruthlessly struck out as containing an obvious allusion to the steersman of St. Peter's bark. Finally, bored and bothered by the political and theological Dogberrys of the day, with their inane prejudices, their solemn stupidity, and their entire ignorance of the conditions necessary for the growth of sane and healthy art, Madame Ristori made up her mind to leave the stage. She, however, was extremely anxious to appear once before a Parisian audience, Paris being at that time the centre of dramatic activity, and after some consideration left Italy for France in the year 1855. There she seems to have been a great success, particularly in the part of Myrrha; classical without being cold, artistic without being academic, she brought to the interpretation of the character of Alfieri's great heroine the colour-element of passion, the form-element of style. Jules Janin was loud in his praises, the Emperor begged Ristori to join the troupe of the Comédie Française, and Rachel, with the strange narrow jealousy of her nature, trembled for her laurels. Myrrha was followed by Marie Stuart, and Marie Stuart by Medea. In the

REVIEWS

latter part Madame Ristori excited the greatest enthusiasm. Ary Scheffer designed her costumes for her; and the Niobe that stands in the Uffizzi Gallery at Florence, suggested to Madame Ristori her famous pose in the scene with the children. She would not consent, however, to remain in France, and we find her subsequently playing in almost every country in the world from Egypt to Mexico, from Denmark to Honolulu. Her representations of classical plays seem to have been always immensely admired. When she played at Athens, the King offered to arrange for a performance in the beautiful old theatre of Dionysos, and during her tour in Portugal she produced *Medea* before the University of Coimbra. Her description of the latter engagement is extremely interesting. On her arrival at the University, she was received by the entire body of the undergraduates, who still wear a costume almost mediæval in character. Some of them came on the stage in the course of the play as the handmaidens of Creusa, hiding their black beards beneath heavy veils, and as soon as they had finished their parts they took their places gravely among the audience, to Madame Ristori's horror, still in their Greek dress, but with their veils thrown back, and smoking long cigars. 'Ce n'est pas la première fois,' she says, 'que j'ai dû empêcher, par un effort de volonté, la tragédie de se terminer en farce.' Very interesting, also, is her account of the production of Montanelli's *Camma*, and she tells an amusing story of the arrest of the author by the French police on the charge of murder, in consequence of a telegram she sent to him in which the words 'body of the victim' occurred. Indeed, the whole book is full of cleverly written stories, and admirable criticisms on

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

dramatic art. I have quoted from the French version, which happens to be the one that lies before me, but whether in French or Italian the book is one of the most fascinating autobiographies that has appeared for some time, even in an age like ours when literary egotism has been brought to such an exquisite pitch of perfection.

The New Purgatory and Other Poems, by Miss E. R. Chapman, is, in some respects, a very remarkable little volume. It used to be said that women were too poetical by nature to make great poets, too receptive to be really creative, too well satisfied with mere feeling to search after the marble splendour of form. But we must not judge of woman's poetic power by her achievements in days when education was denied to her, for where there is no faculty of expression no art is possible. Mrs. Browning, the first great English poetess, was also an admirable scholar, though she may not have put the accents on her Greek, and even in those poems that seem most remote from classical life, such as *Aurora Leigh*, for instance, it is not difficult to trace the fine literary influence of a classical training. Since Mrs. Browning's time, education has become, not the privilege of a few women, but the inalienable inheritance of all; and, as a natural consequence of the increased faculty of expression thereby gained, the women poets of our day hold a very high literary position. Curiously enough, their poetry is, as a rule, more distinguished for strength than for beauty; they seem to love to grapple with the big intellectual problems of modern life; science, philosophy and metaphysics form a large portion of their ordinary subject-matter; they

REVIEWS

leave the triviality of triolets to men, and try to read the writing on the wall, and to solve the last secret of the Sphinx. Hence Robert Browning, not Keats, is their idol; *Sordello* moves them more than the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*; and all Lord Tennyson's magic and music seems to them as nothing compared with the psychological subtleties of *The Ring and the Book*, or the pregnant questions stirred in the dialogue between Blougram and Gigadibs. Indeed I remember hearing a charming young Girtonian, forgetting for a moment the exquisite lyrics in *Pippa Passes*, and the superb blank verse of *Men and Women*, state quite seriously that the reason she admired the author of *Red-Cotton Night-Cap Country* was that he had headed a reaction against beauty in poetry!

Miss Chapman is probably one of Mr. Browning's disciples. She does not imitate him, but it is easy to discern his influence on her verse, and she has caught something of his fine, strange faith. Take, for instance, her poem, *A Strong-minded Woman*:

See her? Oh, yes!—Come this way—hush! this way,
 Here she is lying,
 Sweet—with the smile her face wore yesterday,
 As she lay dying.
 Calm, the mind-fever gone, and, praise God! gone
 All the heart-hunger;
 Looking the merest girl at forty-one—
 You guessed her younger?
 Well, she'd the flower-bloom that children have,
 Was lithe and pliant,
 With eyes as innocent blue as they were brave,
 Resolved, defiant.
 Yourself—you worship art! Well, at that shrine
 She too bowed lowly,
 Drank thirstily of beauty, as of wine,
 Proclaimed it holy.

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

But could you follow her when, in a breath,
 She knelt to science,
Vowing to truth true service to the death,
 And heart-reliance?
Nay,—then for you she underwent eclipse,
 Appeared as alien
As once, before he prayed, those ivory lips
 Seemed to Pygmalion.

Hear from your heaven, my dear, my lost delight,
 You who were woman
To your heart's heart, and not more pure, more white,
 Than warmly human.
How shall I answer? How express, reveal
 Your true life-story?
How utter, if they cannot guess—not feel
 Your crowning glory?
This way. Attend my words. The rich, we know,
 Do into heaven
Enter but hardly; to the poor, the low,
 God's kingdom's given.
Well, there's another heaven—a heaven on earth—
 (That's love's fruition)
Whereto a certain lack—a certain dearth—
 Gains best admission.
Here, too, she was too rich—ah, God! if less
 Love had been lent her!—
Into the realm of human happiness
 These look—not enter.

Well, here we have, if not quite an echo, at least a reminiscence of the metre of *The Grammarian's Funeral*; and the peculiar blending together of lyrical and dramatic forms, seems essentially characteristic of Mr. Browning's method. Yet there is a distinct personal note running all through the poem, and true originality is to be found rather in the use made of a model than in the rejection of all models and masters. *Dans l'art comme dans la nature on est toujours fils de quelqu'un*, and we should not quarrel with the reed if it whispers to us the

REVIEWS

music of the lyre. A little child once asked me if it was the nightingale who taught the linnets how to sing.

Miss Chapman's other poems contain a great deal that is interesting. The most ambitious is *The New Purgatory*, to which the book owes its title. It is a vision of a strange garden in which, cleansed and purified of all stain and shame, walk Judas of Cherioth, Nero the Lord of Rome, Ysabel the wife of Ahab, and others, around whose names cling terrible memories of horror, or awful splendours of sin. The conception is fine, but the treatment is hardly adequate. There are, however, some good strong lines in it, and, indeed, almost all of Miss Chapman's poems are worth reading, if not for their absolute beauty, at least for their intellectual intention.

Nothing is more interesting than to watch the change and development of the art of novel-writing in this nineteenth century—'this so-called nineteenth century,' as an impassioned young orator once termed it, after a contemptuous diatribe against the evils of modern civilisation. In France they have had one great genius, Balzac, who invented the modern method of looking at life; and one great artist, Flaubert, who is the impeccable master of style; and to the influence of these two men we may trace almost all contemporary French fiction. But in England we have had no schools worth speaking of. The fiery torch lit by the Brontës has not been passed on to other hands; Dickens has influenced only journalism; Thackeray's delightful superficial philosophy, superb narrative power, and clever social satire have found no echoes; nor has Trollope left any direct successors behind him—a fact which is not much to be regretted, however, as, admirable though Trollope undoubtedly is for rainy afternoons

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

and tedious railway journeys, from the point of view of literature he is merely the perpetual curate of Puddington Parva. As for George Meredith, who could hope to reproduce him? His style is chaos illumined by brilliant flashes of lightning. As a writer he has mastered everything, except language; as a novelist he can do everything, except tell a story; as an artist he is everything, except articulate. Too strange to be popular, too individual to have imitators, the author of *Richard Feverel* stands absolutely alone. It is easy to disarm criticism, but he has disarmed the disciple. He gives us his philosophy through the medium of wit, and is never so pathetic as when he is humorous. To turn truth into a paradox is not difficult, but George Meredith makes all his paradoxes truths, and no Theseus can thread his labyrinth, no Œdipus solve his secret.

However, it is only fair to acknowledge that there are some signs of a school springing up amongst us. This school is not native, nor does it seek to reproduce any English master. It may be described as the result of the realism of Paris filtered through the refining influence of Boston. Analysis, not action, is its aim; it has more psychology than passion, and it plays very cleverly upon one string, and this is the commonplace.

As a reaction against this school, it is pleasant to come across a novel like Lady Augusta Noel's *Hithersea Mere*. If this story has any definite defect, it comes from its delicacy and lightness of treatment. An industrious Bostonian would have made half a dozen novels out of it, and have had enough left for a serial. Lady Augusta Noel is content to vivify her characters, and does not care about

REVIEWS

vivisection; she suggests rather than explains; and she does not seek to make life too obviously rational. Romance, picturesqueness, charm — these are the qualities of her book. As for its plot, it has so many plots that it is difficult to describe them. We have the story of Rhona Somerville, the daughter of a great popular preacher, who tries to write her father's life, and, on looking over his papers and early diaries, finds struggle where she expected calm, and doubt where she looked for faith, and is afraid to keep back the truth, and yet dares not publish it. Rhona is quite charming; she is like a little flower that takes itself very seriously, and she shows us how thoroughly nice and natural a narrow-minded girl may be. Then we have the two brothers, John and Adrian Mowbray. John is the hard-working, vigorous clergyman, who is impatient of all theories, brings his faith to the test of action, not of intellect, lives what he believes, and has no sympathy for those who waver or question—a thoroughly admirable, practical, and extremely irritating man. Adrian is the fascinating *dilettante*, the philosophic doubter, a sort of romantic rationalist with a taste for art. Of course, Rhona marries the brother who needs conversion, and their gradual influence on each other is indicated by a few subtle touches. Then we have the curious story of Olga, Adrian Mowbray's first love. She is a wonderful and mystical girl, like a little maiden out of the Sagas, with the blue eyes and fair hair of the North. An old Norwegian nurse is always at her side, a sort of Lapland witch who teaches her how to see visions and to interpret dreams. Adrian mocks at this superstition, as he calls it, but as a consequence of disregarding it, Olga's only brother is drowned skating, and she never speaks to Adrian

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

again. The whole story is told in the most suggestive way, the mere delicacy of the touch making what is strange seem real. The most delightful character in the whole book, however, is a girl called Hilary Marston, and hers also is the most tragic tale of all. Hilary is like a little woodland faun, half Greek and half gipsy; she knows the note of every bird, and the haunt of every animal; she is terribly out of place in a drawing-room, but is on intimate terms with every young poacher in the district; squirrels come and sit on her shoulder, which is pretty, and she carries ferrets in her pockets, which is dreadful; she never reads a book, and has not got a single accomplishment, but she is fascinating and fearless, and wiser, in her own way, than any pedant or bookworm. This poor little English Dryad falls passionately in love with a great blind helpless hero, who regards her as a sort of pleasant tom-boy; and her death is most touching and pathetic. Lady Augusta Noel has a charming and winning style, her descriptions of Nature are quite admirable, and her book is one of the most pleasantly-written novels that has appeared this winter.

Miss Alice Corkran's *Margery Merton's Girlhood* has the same lightness of touch and grace of treatment. Though ostensibly meant for young people, it is a story that all can read with pleasure, for it is true without being harsh, and beautiful without being affected, and its rejection of the stronger and more violent passions of life is artistic rather than ascetic. In a word, it is a little piece of true literature, as dainty as it is delicate, and as sweet as it is simple. Margery Merton is brought up in Paris by an old maiden aunt, who has an elaborate theory of education, and strict ideas about dis-

REVIEWS

cipline. Her system is an excellent one, being founded on the science of Darwin and the wisdom of Solomon, but it comes to terrible grief when put into practice ; and finally she has to procure a governess, Madame Réville, the widow of a great and unappreciated French painter. From her Margery gets her first feeling for art, and the chief interest of the book centres round a competition for an art scholarship, into which Margery and the other girls of the convent school enter. Margery selects Joan of Arc as her subject ; and, rather to the horror of the good nuns, who think that the saint should have her golden aureole, and be as gorgeous and as ecclesiastical as bright paints and bad drawing can make her, the picture represents a common peasant girl, standing in an old orchard, and listening in ignorant terror to the strange voices whispering in her ear. The scene in which she shows her sketch for the first time to the art master and the Mother Superior is very cleverly rendered indeed, and shows considerable dramatic power.

Of course, a good deal of opposition takes place, but ultimately Margery has her own way and, in spite of a wicked plot set on foot by a jealous competitor, who persuades the Mother Superior that the picture is not Margery's own work, she succeeds in winning the prize. The whole account of the gradual development of the conception in the girl's mind, and the various attempts she makes to give her dream its perfect form, is extremely interesting and, indeed, the book deserves a place among what Sir George Trevelyan has happily termed 'the art-literature' of our day. Mr. Ruskin in prose, and Mr. Browning in poetry, were the first who drew for us the workings of the artist soul, the first who led us from the paint-

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

ing or statue to the hand that fashioned it, and the brain that gave it life. They seem to have made art more expressive for us, to have shown us a passionate humanity lying behind line and colour. Theirs was the seed of this new literature, and theirs, too, is its flower; but it is pleasant to note their influence on Miss Corkran's little story, in which the creation of a picture forms the dominant *motif*.

Mrs. Pfeiffer's *Women and Work* is a collection of most interesting essays on the relation to health and physical development of the higher education of girls, and the intellectual or more systematised effort of woman. Mrs. Pfeiffer, who writes a most admirable prose style, deals in succession with the sentimental difficulty, with the economic problem, and with the arguments of physiologists. She boldly grapples with Professor Romanes, whose recent article in the *Nineteenth Century*, on the leading characters which mentally differentiate men and women, attracted so much attention, and produces some very valuable statistics from America, where the influence of education on health has been most carefully studied. Her book is a most important contribution to the discussion of one of the great social problems of our day. The extended activity of women is now an accomplished fact; its results are on their trial; and Mrs. Pfeiffer's excellent essays sum up the situation very completely, and show the rational and scientific basis of the movement more clearly and more logically than any other treatise I have as yet seen.

It is interesting to note that many of the most advanced modern ideas on the subject of the education of women are anticipated by Defoe in his wonderful *Essay upon Projects*, where he proposes that a college

REVIEWS

for women should be erected in every county in England, and ten colleges of the kind in London. 'I have often thought of it,' he says, 'as one of the most barbarous customs in the world that we deny the advantages of learning to women. Their youth is spent to teach them to stitch and sew, or make baubles. They are taught to read, indeed, and perhaps to write their names or so, and that is the height of a woman's education. And I would but ask any who slight the sex for their understanding, "What is a man (a gentleman I mean) good for that is taught no more?" What has the woman done to forfeit the privilege of being taught? Shall we upbraid women with folly when it is only the error of this inhuman custom that hindered them being made wiser?' Defoe then proceeds to elaborate his scheme for the foundation of women's colleges, and enters into minute details about the architecture, the general curriculum, and the discipline. His suggestion that the penalty of death should be inflicted on any man who ventured to make a proposal of marriage to any of the girl students during term time possibly suggested the plot of Lord Tennyson's *Princess*, so its harshness may be excused, and in all other respects his ideas are admirable. I am glad to see that this curious little volume forms one of the National Library series. In its anticipations of many of our most modern inventions it shows how thoroughly practical all dreamers are.

I am sorry to see that Mrs. Fawcett deprecates the engagement of ladies of education as dressmakers and milliners, and speaks of it as being detrimental to those who have fewer educational advantages. I myself would like to see dressmaking regarded not merely as a learned profession, but as a fine art. To construct a costume that will be at once rational and

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES

beautiful requires an accurate knowledge of the principles of proportion, a thorough acquaintance with the laws of health, a subtle sense of colour, and a quick appreciation of the proper use of materials, and the proper qualities of pattern and design. The health of a nation depends very largely on its mode of dress; the artistic feeling of a nation should find expression in its costume quite as much as in its architecture; and just as the upholstering tradesman has had to give place to the decorative artist, so the ordinary milliner, with her lack of taste and lack of knowledge, her foolish fashions and her feeble inventions, will have to make way for the scientific and artistic dress designer. Indeed, so far from it being wise to discourage women of education from taking up the profession of dressmakers, it is exactly women of education who are needed, and I am glad to see in the new technical college for women at Bedford, millinery and dressmaking are to be taught as part of the ordinary curriculum. There has also been started in London a Society of Lady Dressmakers for the purpose of teaching educated girls and women, and the Scientific Dress Association is, I hear, doing very good work in the same direction.

I have received some very beautiful specimens of Christmas books from Messrs. Griffith and Farran. *Treasures of Art and Song*, edited by Robert Ellice Mack, is a real *édition de luxe* of pretty poems and pretty pictures; and *Through the Year* is a wonderfully artistic calendar.

Messrs. Hildesheimer and Faulkner have also sent me *Rhymes and Roses*, illustrated by Ernest Wilson and St. Clair Simmons; *Cape Town Dicky*, a child's book, with some very lovely pictures by Miss

REVIEWS

Alice Havers ; a wonderful edition of *The Deserted Village*, illustrated by Mr. Charles Gregory and Mr. Hines ; and some really charming Christmas cards, those by Miss Alice Havers, Miss Edwards, and Miss Dealy being especially good.

The most perfect and the most poisonous of all modern French poets once remarked that a man can live for three days without bread, but that no one can live for three days without poetry. This, however, can hardly be said to be a popular view, or one that commends itself to that curiously uncommon quality which is called common-sense. I fancy that most people, if they do not actually prefer a salmis to a sonnet, certainly like their culture to repose on a basis of good cookery, and as there is something to be said for this attitude, I am glad to see that several ladies are interesting themselves in cookery classes. Mrs. Marshall's brilliant lectures are, of course, well known, and besides her there is Madame Lebour-Fawssett, who holds weekly classes in Kensington. Madame Fawssett is the author of an admirable little book, entitled *Economical French Cookery for Ladies*, and I am glad to hear that her lectures are so successful. I was talking the other day to a lady who works a great deal at the East End of London, and she told me that no small part of the permanent misery of the poor is due to their entire ignorance of the cleanliness and economy necessary for good cooking.

The Popular Ballad Concert Society has been re-organised under the name of the Popular Musical Union. Its object will be to train the working classes thoroughly in the enjoyment and performance of music, and to provide the inhabitants of the crowded districts of the East End with concerts and ora-

THE POETS' CORNER

torios, to be performed as far as possible by trained members of the working classes; and, though money is urgently required, it is proposed to make the Society to a certain degree self-supporting by giving something in the form of high-class concerts in return for subscriptions and donations. The whole scheme is an excellent one, and I hope that the readers of the *Woman's World* will give it their valuable support. Mrs. Ernest Hart is the secretary, and the treasurer is the Rev. S. Barnett.

(1) *Etudes et Souvenirs*. By Madame Ristori. (Paul Ollendorff.)

(2) *The New Purgatory and Other Poems*. By Elizabeth Rachel Chapman. (Fisher Unwin.)

(3) *Hithersea Mere*. By Lady Augusta Noel, Author of *Wandering Willie, From Generation to Generation, etc.* (Macmillan and Co.)

(4) *Margery Merton's Girlhood*. By Alice Corkran. (Blackie and Son.)

(5) *Women and Work*. By Emily Pfeiffer. (Trübner and Co.)

(6) *Treasures of Art and Song*. Edited by Robert Ellice Mack. (Griffith and Farren.)

(7) *Rhymes and Roses*. Illustrated by Ernest Wilson and St. Clair Simons. *Cape Town Dicky*. Illustrated by Alice Havers. *The Deserted Village*. Illustrated by Charles Gregory and John Hines. (Hildesheimer and Faulkner.)





PR
5810
F09
v.12

Wilde, Oscar
[Collected works]

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

